

HAMEL

HAMEL,

THE OBEAH MAN.

— I apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

OTHELLO.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HAMEL.

CHAPTER I.

Yet hold ! for oh ! this prologue lets me in
To a most fatal tragedy to come. RICHARD III.

AT the close of a sultry day in the month of October, in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two ; or rather at the moment when the sun (whose fiery ardour had not been moderated in any part of his course by the least zephyr of the sea breeze) had just sunk behind the emerald summits of the Blue Mountain, and relieved from his scorching rays those Europeans who toil on the northern shores of Jamaica ; a person who (from some circumstances about to be explained) appeared to be a stranger, was seen riding along the western bank of the Rio Grande, that clear and beautiful stream which, hurrying

down from the wildernesses of the island, carries the torrents of its highest mountains to the Atlantic. The stranger seemed to be seeking a ford, and strove from time to time to prevail on a sulky-looking Spanish horse, which bore him without manifesting any satisfaction at his burthen, to venture through the deep and rapid current; but it was evident that the rider and his steed were of two minds on the point, and that the pertinacity of the latter was more than a match for the hesitating and undecided anxiety of the former; whose timidity, arising from inexperience of the river, induced him not to press his beast into the flood against that instinct to which he preferred to trust his fortune on the present occasion.

The rider was accoutred in a black coat, cut straight, or it might be of a dingy grey, with black cloth buttons, and a waistcoat of the same. His trowsers were of brown holland, tucked into a huge pair of spatterdashes, buttoned above his knee, as a defence against the bites of musquitos. He wore a large brimmed hat, slouched by many a tropical shower, and rendered rusty by constant exposure to the tropical sun, although at present he carried an umbrella secured in the straps of a portmanteau mounted behind him on his horse's crupper; and his great-coat, of the same sombre hue as his other vestments, was fast-

ened upon his saddle bow. He was attended by a bare-legged negro boy on foot, dressed in an Osna-burgh frock and drawers, which, with a glazed hat on his head, formed the whole of his costume. The boy hung on sometimes to his master's stir-rup, that he might keep pace with the horse; and sometimes, falling into the rear, brought himself up by grasping the animal's long tail; a liberty the beast admitted with an occasional affectation of elevating his croupe and lowering his ears,—intimations that he had a right to kick (though he did not at present) as well understood by young Cuffy as expressed by the horse.

This youngster's features scarcely harmonized with those of his very demure and melancholy-looking master, whose pale and cadaverous countenance indicated something more than bodily mortification and fatigue. His eyes, black and penetrating, were shadowed by brows that had once been dark as the skin of his follower, but now, with the locks that strayed in right lines from under his huge castor, exhibited the mingled hues of black and grey; his nose was sharp and aquiline; and his mouth, though rather of the largest, by no means badly formed, was furnished with a set of short but regular teeth, as white as those of Cuffy, whose happy physiognomy bespoke the innocence and kindness of his heart, and relieved that of the spectator from the sym-

pathy of sadness inspired by the looks of the white-faced traveller. Yet the gloom on the cheek of this last was not attributable perhaps to any dignified grief or sentimentality of disposition—at least his features did not augur any such feeling; nor to age, for he was by some years short of forty. Anxiety of mind, as well as fatigue of body, natural irritability, and pecuniary cares, will impress even on a more juvenile countenance those lines which, visible there only, are channelled by time and memory on the invisible and wasted heart. Whether this were the case in the present instance, will be seen in the course of our narrative.

The stranger and his footman continued their route for some distance beside the river, halting again and again to compare notes as to the fordability of several spots, where the latter declared he could see the tracks of mules and horses, which he thought had crossed from the other side; but his master imagined them to be only indications of the cattle having been there to drink or cool themselves, and referred the point invariably to his horse, who, however anxious to drink or roll in the stream, always manifested the same unwillingness to traverse it. The evening was closing in rapidly, and the traveller, impatient at last of his beast's fears or obstinacy, had directed his valet to strip and try a ford, which,

as he could distinguish by marks on the opposite side, was certainly used at times; when Cuffy, who was already half across the river, called to his master that he could see some Negroes coming down the hills from the interior towards a row of stones or rocks placed a little farther up the winding current, for the convenience of foot passengers, which had been hidden from their view by the trees growing on its banks.

To this rudest of rude bridges the traveller and his boy advanced without delay, being anxious no doubt to leave the river behind them, and hurry to their quarters, yet at some miles distance beyond it, if possible before nightfall; and they had just gained the bridge in question, when they were saluted by the Negroes, who were coming down from their provision grounds with yams, cocos, and various fruits for the next day's market on their heads. There was an excellent ford just above the stepping stones, which the cantancrous horse was compelled to pass, Cuffy still leading the way; and the Negroes furnished them with abundant directions to the settlement for which the traveller inquired, though accompanied with a piece of intelligence not altogether so welcome, as they intimated a report that the said settlement had been deserted since the death of its proprietor, whose widow had gone down to Port Antonio, while his slaves,

some eighteen or twenty, had run away into the woods.

Notwithstanding this information, the traveller's countenance brightened very visibly at sight of some young negro girls of the party, to each of whom he had something agreeable to say—some compliment to their persons, attended with a cavalier and rather equivocal expression of his eyes, which raised a smile on the lips of the sable beauties, and elicited some rather diverting remarks from them on the discrepancy between his language and his looks. One of them, who said she was handmaid to her mistress, observed that he smelt sweet like her lady's washball; and most of them remarked on the perfumed state of his person, to which it must be avowed he was not inattentive: and whether they were cosmetics, or preparations for the hair, or essences to gratify his own olfactory nerves, which he breathed, he was, in fact, "perfumed like a milliner."

Yet in the midst of these odours he asked the young girls whether they were married; and if married, whether the ceremony had been performed by a priest or a missionary, or whether they were married after the African fashion. He enquired too about their soul's grace, their work, profits, punishments:—whether they expected to be free, and how many Mulatto and Quadroon girls there were on their master's estate, and if

his daughter were handsome ; and then relapsed into some rather spiritual advice, mingled with a few allusions to the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched.

The girls began to think him an unaccountable buckra, and rather affected with insanity ; more especially as he persisted in his intention of proceeding to the settlement of which they had given him such an unfavourable account, and refused their assurance, on the part of their master or the overseer, of good quarters and hospitable entertainment for the night. Cuffy would fain have seconded their arguments, but his master silenced him with a gloomy frown ; and after a few more desultory observations to the women, with some of whom he chose to shake hands, the head of the Spanish steed was turned toward the mountains ; and Cuffy again seizing its tail, master and man resumed their course. The short twilight expired, and the shadows of night rendered still more sombre the forlorn and unfrequented path along which they journeyed.

CHAPTER II.

The hurricane shall rave, the thunder roll,
And ocean whelm them in its deepest tide,
Or leave them fix'd on the hard pointed rock,
The sport of howling winds.

BRYAN EDWARDS'S JAMAICA.

It was soon as dark as midnight, and the wind, which had withheld its accustomed influence during the whole of the day, began to sigh among the trees, and mingle its distant murmurs with those of the rills and waterfalls which, with the exception of the screams of the crickets, are almost the only sounds that are wont to break even the mid-day silence of the solitudes which Cuffy and his master were now exploring. A zig-zag path, only wide enough for one horseman, led them round the sides of the hills, now mounting, now descending into the depths of ravines ploughed by torrents which, peaceably insignificant at present, yet manifested, by the ruin and confusion along their channels, the headlong passion to which they were sometimes subject, being strewn with

disjointed rocks and fallen trees, which the horse and rider were sorely puzzled to evade or traverse. The interminable forest generally overshadowed their road ; but when from time to time, emerging from its shelter, the latter looked, as if for some assurance, to the canopy of heaven, he failed not to remark the violence with which the increasing vapours were hurried across it, and the flashes of fire which seemed to flit along the summits of the Blue Mountain. These were, after some time, accompanied with a sort of stifled thunder, not bursting, as it is wont to do, during a tornado, with a crash that threatens to rend heaven and earth, but rumbling and confused, as if its echoes were overpowered by the wind, which became every moment more clamorous and contentious.

Poor Cuffy's heart trembled in its sanctuary, and even his master could not repress an involuntary shudder as the lightning blazed around him, and the rain, beginning to drive in his face with persevering and accumulating force, caused him perhaps to think with some regret of the hospitable assurances he had neglected, and with some apprehensions as to those he might or might not receive before his eyes should behold the sun. The horse too, by no means enamoured of its situation, or the elementary confusion which triumphed around, manifested a very sincere desire to retrace his steps towards the habitable country

he had left, and lingered onwards most reluctantly, in spite of sundry kicks bestowed on his ribs by his fractious master, whose impatience increased with the storm which already penetrated through his garments. A tropical wetting is but too often the precursor and cause of those baleful fevers which are almost the only curse upon the otherwise blissful climate of the Antilles,—blissful in the idea of the inhabitants; and our traveller, already initiated in the miseries of this scourge, was but too full of apprehensions and forebodings, as he felt the tempest invade him to the skin.

The thoughts of a sick bed, or sickness without a bed, without medicine, in an abandoned dwelling in the midst of the jungle, as it was represented to him, crowded fast on his perturbed imagination, which now first reproached him for the expedition he had undertaken, although the feeling was purely selfish: however, it was of short duration; the uproar of the elements increased so rapidly and violently, that all apprehensions for the past or the future quickly yielded to more immediate fears for his present personal safety. They had been for some time ascending, and had now gained the summit of a steep hill, whence the road began to descend as abruptly into another dingle, through which they could discover, by the occasional flashes of lightning, a river of more importance than the many petty streams they

had already crossed. This was indeed the Rio Grande again, but little inferior in magnitude to the volume of water it had presented to them some miles below ; and how were they to pass it ? or how indeed were they to reach it ? The road, scarcely three feet wide, wound along the side of a precipice, against which the wind raged with such fury, and the rain beat so spitefully, that the horse for a long time refused to face either of them, and was at last driven down into the valley by master and man on foot, urging him with sticks, and preventing him from turning round in the narrow path, so slippery and precipitous that he slid down the last portion of it on his hind quarters, and rolled over and over into the narrow plain below, bursting his girths and scattering abroad his harness and the portmanteau, umbrella, and great coat. These were, however, readjusted with a promptitude inspired by the occasion, and with a resolution which was little else than the effect of despair ; the river was passed in comparative safety ; Cuffy, who led the horse, only stumbling occasionally over the loose rocks which strewed its channel. But scarcely had they reached the terra firma on the other side, when the terrified boy cried out that the earth shook beneath him, and ran up the path which they had found, as if he expected the river to rise and arrest him, or hurry him with its waters down its

impetuous current. The horse, no less alarmed, or afraid of losing his negro guide and friend, hastened after him. Another eminence was gained, from whence a track of fire was distinguishable through the storm, driving apparently at a great distance before the wind. "Earthquakes are not uncommon," thought the traveller; "but fire—this must be produced by human means." Cuffy thought otherwise; more especially when he descried other fires in different directions, and one or two now and then flashing into view at no very great apparent distance. The earth shook again; and the wind, as if it had still reserved some of its power for an effort of desperation, burst on them with such exasperated fury, that it seemed impossible to make farther progress against it. Cuffy clung to the boughs and the rocks beside him; and his master being fain to follow his example, the steed, with his equipage, was left to the mercy of the elements, from which they saw him gradually recede to the distance of fifty or sixty yards, like a ship driving at her anchors and going bodily to leeward, until he was lost in the darkness. Cuffy, true to his trust, abandoned his hold to keep sight of his master's baggage; while his master, encumbered with his spatterdashes, and fearful of following the fate of his Bucephalus, encouraged his valet to stand by the horse, and took a firmer

grasp of the rocks from which he sought protection. Often and often was his voice lost in the tumult of the storm, as he shouted to his boy for some assurance of his safety. No answer reached his ears—no sound but that of the elements raging as if to produce a second chaos, thunder and wind, the roaring of the augmented waterfalls, the rumbling of the rocks which they loosed from their beds, the creaking and crashing of falling trees. It was in vain that the lightning at every other instant illuminated the scene with its partial flashes, now here, now there: it gleamed only on mountains uncultivated and uninhabited, (except perhaps by a few outlawed runaways who lived by a predatory warfare on the wild hogs and pigeons of the desert,) on naked precipices and foaming torrents, or on the giant trees of the forest quivering beneath the blast of the hurricane. Then came down the rain, not as in the temperate zone even in its most weeping seasons, when the spectator would fain imagine a second deluge; but torrents, sheets of water, seemed to rush from the clouds, and threaten the annihilation of all life beneath the sky. The forlorn and dispirited traveller, still clinging to the rocks which yielded him a partial and precarious kind of security, had groped his way along them to a chink, in whose recesses he flattered himself with an idea of weathering the storm till daylight, drenched—

may, almost drowned—as he was by this time ; but even here the elementary war pursued him ; a stream of water began to ripple down the chink, soon swelling to a torrent, augmented by another which found its way through the chasms of the precipice as if it had burst from some subterranean reservoir. The traveller's situation became insupportable ; he must remove or perish ; yet not daring to quit the crags to which he clung, and availing himself of the partial lee they afforded, he essayed to clamber up the face of the precipice, and with much difficulty and struggling reached the edge of the chink whence the torrent fell. Here he found himself comparatively safe in a long narrow passage or natural alley, in which he was at least secured from the wind by the high and inaccessible rocks on either side of it. Yet as the torrent still flowed over his feet and half way up his legs, he waded onwards to find a spot of higher ground, or an insulated piece of rock that might elevate him above the stream, and with this hope pursued the course of it for above a hundred yards, till he came to a chasm that opened on it from another mass of rocks, between which and his present station another brawling cataract, at the depth of fifty feet beneath him, found its way towards the streams which united in the Rio Grande below. A fallen tree formed a bridge across this fissure, on the opposite side of

which the mouth of a cave might be distinguished by the glare of the lightning, sufficient in appearance to ensure our traveller shelter and safety for the night—shelter from the rain, and security from the wind. It was a most perilous undertaking to pass this bridge ; but prompted by hope, and urged by misery and fear, he ventured on its uncertain surface, keeping his balance by means of a branch that hung from the opposite side, which, with much ado, he reached at last without accident. Here he found what appeared to him steps cut by human art for some height in the face of the rock : he ascended them, and walked into the cave.

CHAPTER III.

Let me wipe off this honorable dew.

SHAKSPEARE.

As soon as the traveller found himself safe from the storm, he sat down on the floor of the cave, and burst into a flood of tears ; and something like an acknowledgment of heaven's mercy passed his lips. His next thought was for his boy and his equipage, the horse and the portmanteau ; nor was he long in adverting to the deplorable condition in which he yet found himself, drenched with rain, and exhausted with the fatigue of having borne up against the passion of the hurricane. To sit still might be fatal to him in this state, and he had even thoughts of stripping off his wet garments, and parading the cave, as far as he could see into it, till daylight ; but was checked by the idea which he could not dismiss of stepping on scorpions or centipedes, or becoming an easier prey to the musquitos which like himself had here found a refuge from the weather. While he

yet mused on the manner in which he was to pass the hours till morning, his olfactory nerves became sensible of a smell of fire,—the smoke of burning wood, which evidently came from the interior of the cave; and hastily concluding it to be owing to one of the wandering fires he had seen abroad, he explored his way through the cavern towards the smell, expecting to find an outlet on the other side of the mountain, through which he calculated the smoke was driven perhaps from a distance. The odour and its vapour increased as he proceeded; and he had not made a very long or very painful march, before he began to perceive a glimmering of light, by which he attained an inner apartment as it were of the cave, filled it is true with smoke, but in some measure illuminated by the fire from which it exhaled; not one of the wandering fires of the wilderness, but a fire of burning brands laid on the floor of the apartment too evidently by human hands. “This,” thought he, “is at least the abode of man: runaway slave, Maroon, or robber, I will yet claim his hospitality; my situation cannot be worse, and what have I to lose? But where is the tenant of the dwelling? Here are plantains too, not long roasted, and rum; and what are these?” he added, taking up some garments that lay on the floor, a contoo, and an instrument of music, a bonjaw. “Let us at least summon the master of the cave. •What ho! hilloh!”

The voice died away unheeded, and the traveller listened to its echoes until he felt almost afraid and ashamed to disturb the silence again. Yet he mustered courage to exert his voice a second and a third time, though as at first ineffectually. Sufficiently removed from the storm without, to hear no more of it than an occasional murmur which stole along the vault he had penetrated, too faint to cause him any farther concern, his own voice was reverberated on his ears with a force from which he shrank within himself, so painful was it to his oppressed and agitated nerves. He called no more; but conforming himself with a philosophical moderation to the hour and the scene in which he found himself, he trimmed the fire; took off his wet clothes, which he wrung and disposed around it; attired himself in the contour of his invisible host; and wrapping his feet in a blanket which lay beside it, helped himself from the calabash of rum, and put some of the plantains on the fire again to warm. He had seated himself on a bundle of sticks, and as he took a second taste of the rum calabash, surveyed at his leisure, by the cheerful blaze he had made, the extent and furniture of his apartment.

It was a lofty cavern hewn by the hand of nature in the otherwise solid lime-stone rock, from the roof of which hung many stalactites, whose points were blackened by the smoke from the fire

beneath. Besides the opening by which the traveller had entered, there were four other apertures, each leading, as it seemed from the glimpse he had taken of them, to other recesses in the rock, and so much resembling each other that he could not now distinctly ascertain that which had admitted him. Alarmed for a moment at this discovery, he arose from his seat, and taking a fire-brand from the blazing pile, would fain have explored these vomitories, into each of which he walked a few paces, without however deriving the information he required, or gaining any but a conviction that they extended farther than he was disposed at present to penetrate. He next surveyed the precincts of the cave itself, and its rather curious contents. In a recess stood a couple of spears, one solely of hard wood, whose point was rendered still harder by fire; the other was shod with iron and rusted apparently with blood; a bamboo rod, ten feet in length and about an inch in thickness, leaned against the rock beside them, carved or tattooed from end to end. In another angle of the vault was a calabash filled with various sorts of hair, among which it was easy to discriminate that of white men, horses, and dogs. These were huddled together, and crowded with feathers of various birds, especially those of domestic poultry and wild parrots, with one or two of the spoils of a macaw. A human skull

was placed beside this calabash, from which the teeth were missing; but on turning it up, the traveller found them with a quantity of broken glass crammed into the cerebellum, and covered up with a wad of silk cotton, to prevent them from falling out. There were several other skulls in a second recess, some perfect, some which had been broken apparently with a sharp pointed instrument, and many of them serving as calabashes or boxes to hold the strange property of the master of the cave; one was a receptacle for gunpowder, which the inquisitive traveller narrowly escaped inflaming; a second contained bullets and shot of various sizes, mixed with old nails and pieces of rag; and from a third he saw with no little horror a black snake uncoil itself the moment he touched it. There were three muskets, all old and out of order; a pistol and two cutlasses, disposed on different ledges of the rock; a large conch-shell fitted with a belt of mahoe bark, to be worn over the shoulder, hung from a projection, with several other pieces of rope made of similar materials, to which were attached rings of wood and hollowed stones, perhaps intended for amulets or charms. A lamp of clay at last arrested his attention; it had carved on it some rude figures, and was filled with oil of the Palma Christi, having a wick formed of the fibres of the plantain stalk. This the intruder took the liberty of illumining, to assist

him more conveniently than did his flickering firebrand in the farther search he seemed disposed to prosecute. By the help of this he espied a pair of shoepatters, a sort of coarse sandal, and a red cloak resembling the South-American poncho. Some salted fish was suspended from a part of the roof, with a large calabash of sugar, and another of coarse salt; and an earthen jar contained no small store of salted pork. There were several pieces of jerked hog hanging from a stick placed across this recess, to one of which he helped himself without ceremony; and thinking he had made sufficient search for the present, returned to the fire, on which he heaped fresh fuel, raking forward the embers to cook his meat: placed his lamp on a shelf of the rock full in his view; and taking a gombah for his stool, sat down very deliberately to his supper. He ate with no sparing appetite; and the rum which he quaffed as his thirst prompted him, refreshed his body and composed his mind so happily and so gradually, that what with that and his fatigue, the solace of the fire and the fumes of his digestion, he at last slipt gently from his gombah, which now served him for a pillow, rolled himself up in his blanket, and fell into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Pyg. And you a figure-caster, a conjurer !

Skir. A conjurer ?

Pyg. Let me alone, I'll instruct you, and teach you to deceive all eyes but the devil's.

THE PURITAN.

DEEP and leaden as were the slumbers of our traveller, his mind was not wholly relieved from the cares of this world, for which, sleeping or waking, nature seems by some perversion from her original and benevolent purpose to have formed this our enslaved, if not incarcerated, sensorium : not but that there are dreams of all denominations—visions of bliss, as well as of sorrow ; but the first are still dependent on terrestrial objects, human interests and passions, as well as the latter ; and where is the mind that would not, at many periods of even a short life, have consented to wipe away from its tablets the very memory of those, to escape the painful remembrances of these ? The brains of our weather-beaten sleeper were not long idle. He fancied

himself still contending with the elements, and striving in vain to save his boy Cuffy from the storm, or keep his own seat on his Spanish horse, which succeeded in kicking his master into a river, whose waves were waves of fire. Then again he fancied himself sauntering by moonlight on the banks of another, a clear and crystal stream, whence he descried at a distance the buildings of a sugar estate on fire. He ran towards it. From the great house (as the principal dwelling is called) a female figure, young and beautiful, looked out, imploring help. The passion of the sleeper was awakened; he clambered into the piazza, reconducted the lady to her chamber, assured her of her safety, and in spite of her distress, presumed to talk to her of his love; nay, insensible to all but his own selfish feelings, attempted to pollute her with his caresses. She died in his arms, as he thought, cursing him for his cruelty; and as he shrunk with horror from her inanimate and ghastly corpse, he saw a fiend arise from her bed, fix on him its eyes glaring with a malignant fury, by a threatening action command him into silence, and trace on his forehead, in burning characters, the fearful syllable death. The only sound which escaped the lips of the demon was that of his own name—Roland! Roland!—articulated in a voice of mingled triumph and revenge—Roland!

The traveller started from his dream as if he

had been roused by the sting of a scorpion. He sat upright for an instant, and stared wildly around, scarce recollecting his own identity or situation; but what was his amazement, not to say horror, on perceiving before him the very figure of the demon of his dream, or a figure which his fancy so quickly substituted for him, that the idea of the first was as if by magic resolved and condensed into that which he beheld?

This figure stood before the lamp, whose rays served to define the outline of his person with the greatest accuracy. Of his features little or nothing could be seen, except the light gleaming from his eyeballs. He stood in an attitude which the dreamer's fears quickly determined to be the menacing posture of the demon from which he had shrunk; the forefinger of his right hand elevated, the left hand leaning on a bamboo staff. "In the name of God or Devil," cried Roland impatiently, "who or what art thou?"

The figure relaxed from its position, lowered its right hand, advanced a step forward with a gentle inclination of the head, and replied in a mild and almost musical tone of voice—"Master—what you will." A less experienced person than Roland might have entertained a momentary supposition that the being before him, who had first excited his fears to give him courage, was no other than the evil spirit himself, thus come to tempt him; but our traveller was too much *au fait* on the affairs

of this world to expect a bow from the Enemy of mankind ; though scared as he had been from his terrific dream, it was some moments before he could thoroughly collect himself. “ What you please,—a Negro,” repeated the figure, as if to give the white man time to reassure himself.

“ What I please, and a Negro”—rejoined Roland, as if unconscious of what he heard.—“ But what may be your business, and what want you here ? Is this your cave ?”

“ My business,” replied the black man, “ is sometimes to go round the lines of my master’s estate, sometimes to look after runaway Negroes, to watch the provision grounds, to hunt wild hogs.”

“ Whose cave then is this,” said the other, “ so well provided with food and necessaries, and—if I mistake not—with evidences of an illicit calling ? The owner of the cave, methinks, must be a wizard—is he not ?”

“ The cave, master,” replied the Negro, “ has harboured, as I have heard for long times past, many runaway Negroes ; they have their provisions here.”

“ They have,” interrupted the other. “ I found a fire, and roasted plantains and rum, all ready for entertainment : though I fancied from what I have seen, that Obeah spells were rather the business of those who frequent this cavern.”

“ You are at least fortunate,” answered the Negro, seeming to pay no attention to the remark of Roland about Obeah, “ in having found shelter from the storm, and food ; and those to whom the cave belongs, were they here, would still respect the laws of hospitality, and make you welcome, be what they may, to all you can require at their hands. But if you have satisfied your hunger, be not offended that I do the same. My presence shall be no annoyance to you. Sleep again, if you feel disposed. I will eat in silence, and at a distance from you.”

“ Sit down, sit down,” resumed the white man, as he arose himself ; “ eat and be happy. I have no farther disposition to sleep : my mind is too much harassed with what I have encountered this night ; my boy, and my horse, and my baggage, are lost in the storm. And where were you ?” added he, looking inquisitively in the face of the Negro ; “ your dress is untouched by the rain.”

“ I had taken shelter,” replied the Negro, “ in another part of these caverns, which extend through to the other side of the mountain, before the rain began.”

“ To the other side of the mountain !” interrupted Roland. “ Aye ! you know by what entrance I arrived here then ?”

“ I know,” replied the Negro unmoved, “ that

you must have entered from the side of Rio Grande, a fearful pass across the devil's gully ; over which" (he added with a submissive and respectful smile) " the Negroes say that none but the devil himself can pass, or one whom the devil leads ; and that in the dark."

" Ha !" cried Roland, a little moved by the observation ; " but you have passed it ?"

" It was never passed by a white man before," replied the Negro, as if he had not adverted to the question. " There was once one who fled towards it for refuge, not from a hurricane, but from the punishment of crimes and misdeeds."

" What had he committed?" said Roland.

" It was told of him, but I know not how truly," replied the other, " that he had set fire to a gentleman's estate, and attempted to kill his daughter in a fit of jealousy. He galloped from his pursuers, and scrambled up the pass you found, where they could not follow him ; and halting at the bridge, invoked the white man's God to help him over ; but he slipped, and tumbled down the gully."

While this conversation took place, the Negro had renewed the fire, taken a piece of salted pork from the jar, put it into an iron pot with some water in it, which Roland had overlooked in his examination of the premises, and set it on the fire to boil. He produced some water

also from one of the recesses, with which he mixed himself some rum in a small calabash; and after the libation of a little on the earth, drank to the health of the white man. Roland was neither pleased nor surprised to see him find the food and materials he required with so much ease and familiarity; not doubting that he was at least one of the proprietors of the cave, according to his account of them. But though he felt a confidence in the hospitality of one who could, had he been so disposed, have taken his life while he was sleeping, still he could not regard him without a suspicious feeling, and watched him as he moved about the cave with the same anxious scrutiny as that with which an alarmed cat keeps sight of a terrier dog who has invaded the stable or loft where her offspring are concealed. He had full time to remark the singularity of his dress and appearance, of which it may not be improper to give the reader some idea; as Hamel (by which name he was known) will probably take a principal part in the scenes and events hereafter to be described.

This dealer in magic, for he was no less a personage, was of a slight and elegant make, though very small of stature, being considerably under the middle size. His age was at least sixty; but the lines which that had traced on his features indicated, notwithstanding his profession, no

feeling hostile to his fellow-creatures, at war with human nature, or dissatisfied with himself. He was attired in a South American poncho, which had once been of a bright scarlet colour, fastened round his waist by a thin leathern girdle; and his head was decorated with a red silk handkerchief, tied in the fashion of a turban. He was barefooted, and without any offensive weapon; for such the bamboo wand on which he had leaned could hardly be denominated. He moved with an elasticity uncommon for his years; and his manner indicated on his part perfect confidence, wholly unsuspecting of his guest or his purpose. Yet it was but too evident to Roland, that the Negro had evaded his questions as to the magic talents or qualities of some one who frequented the cave; but as the use of Obeah is denounced by law, however despised by white men, he could not attach any particular consequence to such evasion, nor justify himself in expecting any confession on a subject of such importance to the professors or participators in this blind sort of necromancy, if it may be so called.

“Whether conjuror or not,” thought Roland, “he does justice to his food;” for in fact the Obeah man had seated himself to his meal at a respectful distance from his guest, and feasted on his humble viands with a perseverance worthy of any high priest, not excepting those who presided at

the slaughter of hecatombs. "I have not eaten," said he to his guest, "for twenty hours."

"Why so?" demanded Roland: "have you penances in your religion—fasts, mortifications?"

The Negro shook his head and smiled. "Have *you*, master? Do you think fasting or reading prayers will compensate for injuries done to man? Not that I mean to imply anything as relative to yourself," he added; remarking that his question rather affected the white man. "Your religion is now become that of almost all the slaves and free people of colour; yet I never knew them fast or mortify themselves."

"Then wherefore have you abstained from eating so long?" interrupted Roland.

"I have been some distance hence," replied Hamel, "to a plantation that had been deserted. The owner is dead; his wife, afraid to remain among her Negroes, had taken her children to the Bay at Port Antonio; and a white man, a missionary preaching man, was expected to come there, to try if he could persuade the Negroes to go down to the same place to be sold."

"You think he would not have succeeded?" said Roland. "Those who have once shaken off their bonds are not likely to offer themselves again as willing prisoners; besides, there is such a stir making in England for the emancipation of the slaves, that——and it is so much against the

religion which the slave owners at least affect to profess, that perhaps few people just now would venture to purchase them; and they would be more apt to increase their numbers from other estates, which will follow their example, than tamely to surrender themselves again to whips and chains; nay, might they not in turn apply the whips and chains to their oppressors?"

"Whips and chains!" said the Obeah man, with a seemingly innocent smile. "Have you not whips and chains in your country yonder too? How do you punish violence, incendiaries, murderers, ravishers, traitors, and rebels? Can you govern white men with prayers and talking? You have happiness and plenty there, and no man works but when he likes; why do not the white men stay in their own country, and leave the Negroes to themselves here?"

"Ah!" replied Roland, "you can never be happy, at least for some years, without white men, who shall teach your children to read, to write, to pray to the only true God; the knowledge of the only means of salvation. Would you wish your little ones to become the prey of hell-fire? What ideas will they have of a crucified Saviour? You have among you, it is true, freemen and slaves who can read and write, and some who have made even a little progress in religion; but unfortunately those who are most instructed seem to hold their reli-

gion lightest. In my country yonder, as you call it, we are obliged to have priests and ministers of religion, and bishops or elders over them, to keep them from doing wrong; and without some such system here you will relapse into anarchy and infidelity."

"Is your religion a science then," said Hamel, "that it must be taught and learned? and are your chief men in it in danger of doing wrong? We know our duty here already; and it were better to leave us to the God who has guarded us hitherto."

"Your God," interrupted Roland, "has left you slaves; the Christian's God will make you free."

"Ah!" cried the wizard, "is it so? Will your God make the Negroes free?" (He looked the white man steadily in the face.) "Will he leave us unencumbered with white parsons? What security can you give us of that? It were better I belonged still to a tyrannical master, than that I was subjected to a tyrannical white priest, who should take from me one of my ten fingers."

"Your master," cried Roland rather exultingly, "takes the labour of all your ten fingers."

"Not so," rejoined Hamel: "we work, it is true, for our masters; but they feed us, clothe us, give us land and houses, attend us in sickness and old age, and leave our minds, our thoughts, to ourselves."

“They leave you to the Devil,” said the white man. “If you had a spark of courage, you would emancipate yourselves ; if you had one glimmering of the greatness of our God, you would take up the cross, and devote yourselves to his service.”

“You are a bold man,” replied Hamel again, “to talk so to me ; or a cunning man, and wish to make me think you can and will serve my countrymen.”

“I both can and will,” rejoined the other, “if you are disposed to profit by the opportunity that is about to occur ; I am the Missionary that was expected at your abandoned plantation.”

“I know it,” answered the Obeah man, with a polite and significant nod.

“You know it !” cried Roland.

“Yes, master.”

“But how ?”

“Ah ! master,” said the Obeah man, “there is nothing in these mountains, in this island, which is concealed from me. I boast not of my secrets ; my business is to use them with advantage.”

“Know you then the real purpose for which I was travelling to the forsaken settlement ?”

“I know it, my kind master.”

The Missionary was a little amazed ; but thinking that Hamel’s intention might be only to impose on him, he demanded of him to explain what it was.

“It is for you to explain,” replied the other; “my explanation will not profit you; I could give you evidences of greater knowledge than you dream of; I could tell you who and what you are.”

“Tell me,” exclaimed the Missionary with impatience: “give me some proof of your intelligence.”

“Here is a powder,” said the Obeah man, calmly taking a little phial from his girdle, “which will satisfy many men. Will you please to hold forth your hand? See—it is white as the snows of Mount Atlas.” (The Missionary stared again with amazement.) “I once placed some of it in the palm of a white man, who called upon his God in my presence to avouch his innocence: he was accused of murder. I bid him close his hand as I now close yours;—grasp it tight, press your fingers to your palm;—I told him his God would vouch for him: that if he were innocent, the powder would still be white; if guilty, his fingers would be crimsoned as with blood. Have you pressed your fingers with violence?” The Missionary’s heart palpitated, his teeth almost chattered, and his hand trembled as he re-opened it; but the powder was still white as before. “Hah!” cried the wizard, “you dared not close your hand; my charm is ineffectual, or you stand self-convicted.”

The Missionary breathed again; if a mountain

had been moved from his breast, he could not have felt a greater relief. He held forth his hand with the white powder in it, exclaiming, "False—jugglery."

"Is it false?" cried Hamel; "should it have taken the hue of fire? Yet is it neither falsehood nor jugglery. Let me touch your fingers;—if this hand"—(he looked on the Missionary with an inquisitive smile)—"has never shed innocent blood, let this powder remain unchanged; but if it has shed innocent blood"—(he rubbed the powder firmly with his own finger)—"Lo now! look you there! crimson as the sun-setting in a storm! Are you satisfied? See where it flows like blood even to your arm! deep—deep!"

"Damnation!" cried the Methodist, shuddering at the sight, and shrinking from the touch of his host. "Thou art in league with the fiends of hell. What trick is this? Am I a man to tremble beneath the gaze of a Negro? Thou hast divined aright—No—no,—'tis falsehood all; thy knowledge is a trick;—yet how hast thou divined? or who has known me? Perdition! Dost thou not tremble for the consequences of thy indiscretion? Think'st thou my arm could not annihilate thee?"

"I fear you not," modestly replied the wizard, who had watched his emotion as a boa constrictor may be supposed to watch the unhappy deer he means to spring upon: "I fear you not. You

have eaten of my food, and drank from my own calabash ; you cannot harm me, nor do I meditate any evil to you ; your secret is in safe keeping."

"If it were confined to me," thought Roland, "it were better. Whence does he derive his knowledge ? Oh God ! what scorpions has he awakened in my bosom ! Shall I be outwitted, circumvented, made subservient to a dealer in sorcery and incantations ? and for what ? Yes—I will submit." A thousand fancies mingled in his mind, which resolved themselves at last into one paramount idea ; namely, to mould, if he could, the conjuror to his own purposes. "An arduous task, it is true," thought he ; "but weightier matters have been brought to bear." He dreamed not that perhaps the wizard entertained similar views with respect to himself. He looked towards him, and saw him leaning against the rock at one of the entrances, absorbed in a profound contemplation, which seemed to abstract him from all conviction of the scene before him ; his arms folded under his poncho, his eyes fixed on the floor of the cave. The lamp gleaming on his forehead shewed that his features at least betrayed nothing of what was passing in a mind of which he was so much the master ; yet as it lighted up his crimson head-dress and his ruddy garment, whose shadows were deepened by the gloom behind them, it gave to

his appearance something of the demon with which Roland was yet fain to associate him ; it is true he could not avoid the idea. In a few moments he moved from his position, put himself for an instant in the attitude of one listening to catch a distant sound, and suddenly hurried from the cave.

CHAPTER V.

Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger ;
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted ;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint :
Be secret—false. COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE blast of a conch, a faint and but just audible sound, moaned through the rocky galleries that opened into the cave where the Obeah man, Hamel, had just left his agitated and disconcerted guest. He paced the cave with an irritation almost amounting to frenzy ; now cursing his own untoward fortune, now venting imprecations on the wizard whose singular penetration had unravelled at least one circumstance of his (the Missionary's) life. Yet gloomy and melancholy as the event to which the spell seemed to relate, it was perhaps one which his recollection had almost represented as venial, in comparison with other deeds which preyed on his memory. Misfortune and guilt might have claimed an equal share in that : passion and remorse had been the cause and consequence of these, which had as yet escaped detection ; as had indeed the first alluded to—

known, as Roland had imagined, to himself alone. Yet Hamel had only charged him with shedding blood. The particulars of the circumstance might be a mystery to him still; or he might have made a vague charge on the suggestion solely of his own fancy, taking the chance of getting credit for displaying a supernatural power, to acquire a natural one over the mind of a white man, whose business at any rate he seemed to understand; whose business, if discovered to the authorities of the island, would be death. Death! The Missionary's mind glowed with the thought, and his heart died almost within him, as the conviction sank upon it. "Death! an ignominious death!" Yet what assurance had he that this vile Negro knew his business? He had said nought of it. The Missionary's feelings had betrayed him into an avowal of guilt of some kind, an avowal of which the wizard would not fail to profit: and then—and then!—"These Negroes are not such dolts as the white men give out to one another, but cunning and secret. Who would have dreamed of such a cave as this, so tenanted, in such a wilderness? Let it be Roland's business at least to try if he cannot make it and its tenant useful to his own purposes."

While these reflections, half muttered to himself, half mental, allowed the agitation of his mind to subside, like a boisterous ocean rocking itself

into repose after a storm, the Missionary had laid aside the Negro's blanket and contoo, in which he had been enveloped, and resumed his own more appropriate dress. He trimmed the lamp, and fed the fire, as if not altogether in charity with darkness; and seeing by his watch that it must needs be daylight abroad, began to explore the passage from the cave by which Hamel had so suddenly disappeared: for he could by no recollections divine that by which he had made his own ingress; nor is to be supposed that he was ambitious of again passing over that awful gully, by the bridge which, according to the Obeah man's account, the Enemy of mankind had constructed, and reserved for his own particular friends. However, his fortune did not favour him here; a few yards in darkness brought him to a spot whence he could feel two or three currents of air, evidently issuing from as many passages in the rock; and the sounds of his feet, now equipped with his iron-heeled boots, echoed along these galleries in so many directions, that he became afraid of trusting himself beyond the extent of the spot at which he had halted. The lamp was portable, and might assist him in unravelling the labyrinth; without it he must, as he thought, be lost. He returned to possess himself of it; and as he re-entered the cave by the same aperture as that by which he had quitted it, he saw the Obeah man

likewise re-entering it by another of the passages, followed by a tall athletic Negro, in whose presence the other seemed to dwindle almost into insignificance. The light flashed on his face, and exhibited his features to the gaze of the Missionary, as he stepped into the chief apartment of the cavern; features which were but too well known to him, although the sight of them here, and under such circumstances, was anything but welcome to Roland.

“What do you here?” cried he to the Negro. “Merciful heaven! are you a confederate with this juggling wizard, and have you betrayed—”

The Negro drew himself up to his full height with a resolved and haughty dignity, and answered instantly — “I have betrayed nothing, no man’s business, no man’s name. Hamel has a power as well as yourself—a greater power than yours; I should be a fool to overlook it.”

“What!” cried the Methodist, with an amazement bordering on horror, “are you too leagued with the Prince of Darkness? Is it for this you have been baptized, and made a member of the church of Christ? Have you redeemed your soul from hell, to cast it headlong into the bottomless pit again? And have you faith even in Obeah spells, philtres, and charms? Or are these to be the medicaments of your weak and sickly power in its

infancy! Perish the thought! The curse of God shall wait upon your hopes, annihilate your schemes, and bring down death and ruin on your devoted head—on all your followers. I quit you; I renounce you; lead me from the cave; let me leap into one of your abysses; hurl me down the rocks; kill, murder me. My soul shall never testify to such abominations, nor my efforts for your temporal and eternal salvation be blasted by the breath of those who tamper with the Devil.”

“We do not tamper with the Devil,” said the Obeah man, very modestly interrupting him; “we know no Devil with whom we have any power: it were well if we did.”

“How!” cried the Missionary again; “it were well—well to prostrate your souls at the feet of Moloch? But you are nought. Combah!” (The tall Negro made a sign of acknowledgment as to his name.) “Combah! you have taken the cross of God; you have sworn to renounce the devil and his works; keep to your oath, so shall God prosper you: fail in it, and the care of heaven shall fail you too.”

“Master Roland,” said Hamel, interposing, “we say nothing against your religion, nor your God; we had a religion before we knew yours; such as it was, it is. You have had proof of the knowledge we possess; and even *I* may help to further the scheme you have in view.”

“Said you not,” replied Roland, *addressing himself to Combah*, “*that you had not betrayed me?*” He that is false to his God, does not long keep his faith with man.”

“He has not betrayed you,” rejoined the Obeah man: “his secrets, like yours, are no mysteries to me. Have not I vowed to make him king? You too have promised your aid; but I have vowed.”

“What are your vows?” cried the Missionary, with some little amazement.

“My vows,” said the other, “are his destiny; I have read that in his face, in his forehead, in the stars; it is his spell—I know it, I have divined it, seen it!”

“And mine too, have you read that in your visions?”

“Master Roland,” replied the wizard again, “if I knew your fate, you would still doubt me, though I told you what it might be; nor would you believe that my art could make manifest what is in the womb of time, independent of me, and of the power which you say I derive from a being inimical to your God who rules all things.”

Notwithstanding this remark, the Missionary would have been curious to hear his supposed destiny, even from the lips of a man he affected to despise: the specimen he had seen of the wizard’s influence and knowledge, doubtful and

suspicious as it yet seemed, had made no trifling impression on the superstitious mind of a man bewildered with crimes and intrigues; and he would have been contented to submit himself to the guidance of Hamel in any other case wherein his own reputation was not at stake, as in this. For he would do all religiously; and with that feeling consigned in his own mind the wizard and all his influence to the devil, whenever the conviction of it crossed his recollection. In the midst of this debate, if such it may be called, the other Negro, Combah, interposed his good offices, to make peace between his two friends, whom he naturally enough wished to make the stepping-stones to a power which he had the hardihood to covet—no less than the office of king.

“Master Roland,” he said, “the white men believe in you, the Mulattos and Quadroons too; but the Negroes fear Hamel. When we shall have made them free, they will be also free to choose what prayers they like; and if you can shew them such wondrous things as Hamel has shewn to me, you will have the same chance, at least, of succeeding with them.”

The Obeah man smiled; but the Missionary's features expressed only rage and mortification at this suggestion, heightened by the recollection of the wizard's trick just practised on himself, and the conviction of the mean figure he must cut in

the eyes of both, if Combah should have been made acquainted with that circumstance. Heated with this indignant feeling, he traversed the cave with an impatient step, as if intent on quitting it, and looking alternately into the various openings which led from it, as if determined to try his fortune, and explore a way though one of them even in the dark. It was in vain that Combah tried to pacify him; his passion seemed to augment with the concessions of the others; and he continued to denounce the wizard as an agent of hell, while he blundered along one of the galleries, until he was scared back again by the bats flying about him as they returned from the light of the sun to pass their holidays here. Ashamed of his fears, and amazed at the tranquillity he observed on the features of the two Negroes, he caught up a machet, and made another sally through a different opening, along which the tenants of the cave could hear him groping and stumbling, now shouting, then grumbling again; hacking the rock as he cut at the bats, and cursing these as fiends who inhabited this den of his evil genius, if such a being could exist. His mental and secret determination was to denounce the Obeah man, whom he was resolved to bring to justice; but of this nought escaped his lips even in murmurs. Thus blundering on, he reached at last the daylight, and beheld the chasm which he had entered the previous night.

CHAPTER VI.

Come on, sir ; here's the place. Stand still : how fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !

SHAKSPEARE.

THE way was long enough and close enough, with the exercise of slashing at the bats, to cover the person of the Missionary with a good tropical perspiration, by the time he arrived at the exit from this cave of abomination, as he had sirnamed it in his mind ; so that he stood for some time at the mouth of the gallery, inhaling the fresh breeze, and feasting his eyes with the light of heaven, before he adverted to his particular situation, or to the consideration of any means by which he could descend from that which, had he been covered with feathers, (having only two legs,) might have been called his Alpine perch. A spectator from below would have imagined that nothing less than feathers, or the leathery wings usually and fancifully given to personifications of Satan, could have elevated any animated thing to such a pinnacle as that on which master Roland stood

surveying the scene before him,—not of course like the Devil looking over Lincoln, nor as a black carrion crow vulture elongating his telescopic vision to assure himself of the spot from which his dilated nostril snuffed the carcass;—but as what he really was, a pious adventurer at a stand-still from necessity, inhaling the breath of life to give him strength and confidence to proceed in his vocation.

The illuminated azure of the sky above him was yet stained with fleecy clouds sailing gently to the westward. They might be compared to wounded stragglers in the rear of a victorious army; the followers of the storm; harmless, impotent indications of the violence which had preceded them. The distant sea sparkled in the sun, while its huge waves still retained the elasticity which the hurricane had imparted to them, their summits flashing with white spray, hurried along by the wind, like tears chased from the sunny cheeks of youth by hope:—but let us leave metaphors. A considerable plain lay beneath the eyes of the Methodist, between the sea and the woods which he immediately overlooked to the eastward. It was here that he could trace the progress of the fires which had alarmed him the previous night. They had raged through a great extent of long grass, withered by the dry season, and kindled by the negligence of runaway Negroes; and although

the rain had now quenched their flames, it was very apparent, by the blackened acres they had left, and the smoke yet reeking from them, that their fury must have been uncontrollable except by nature's own efforts; and that, once within their influence, all escape from them would have been impossible to any human being. The Missionary's course lay across a part of this plain, as he thought, where he contemplated only dust and ashes; and willing to see everything that related to himself in the best light possible, he was fain to attribute the storm he had weathered to the providence of heaven interposing to save the life of one so valuable to the unchristian Negroes whom he yet meant to enlighten metaphysically and spiritually. Every stream was yet swollen, and the Rio Grande rolled among a mass of foam which marked its course high above its usual and natural banks; while fragments of rock and broken trees, to the enthusiast's imagination, rose and fell as the waves hurled and tossed them about, like condemned spirits tossing on the restless billows of Hades. He felt a sort of pride in the idea, and looked around, bewildered for a moment, in search of some more or less pious fellow-creature who might applaud or envy him for the conceit: but his own safety diverted his attention to other objects. He stood at the mouth of the gallery, as we have stated, where the face of the

perpendicular rock beneath was cut into some shallow steps leading to a narrow ledge, whence a tree hung over that frightful chasm called the Devil's Gully; a chasm not more than fifteen feet across, but apparently of an immense profundity; for, owing to his present position, the Missionary could not see down to the current of water which had perhaps formed and now occupied it as its channel to the Rio Grande. Another tree lay across the gully; but though he had passed this bridge in the dark, it was too awful to be encountered in the light, which served only to make manifest the danger he had escaped; nay, so terrible did the very descent to it appear down the face of the rock, that he had not hardihood enough to attempt it, urged as he was by horror and disgust of the abominations he had seen in the wizard's cavern, by his ambition to denounce the Obeah man, and his anxiety to regain the habitations of civilized life, for more than one purpose which he had at heart. It was in vain that he strained his neck in every direction, to spy out some hope for effecting his escape, some human being who might come to his assistance; in vain he searched with his eyes every bush beneath him for his boy Cuffy, and his Spanish horse, and all his moveables. The mountain path was not visible from his eyrie, and the jungle concealed everything that could have consoled him, encouraged him, or given

him a hope of emancipation from the Obeah man's abode and power. Hour after hour elapsed as the Missionary still contemplated the scene before him; and he began to feel again the calls of hunger, as well as to entertain some little surprise that neither Hamel nor Combah interfered with or even followed him. What could be their motive for thus neglecting him? Did they calculate on starving him into submission to their plans, knowing the almost insurmountable difficulties he must encounter in attempting to descend the rocks? His life was in their power, but that was not worth their taking; moreover Combah depended much on him for his influence with the Christian part of the population; and Combah was a Christian. If *he* could be prevailed on, the wizard might be kept in check; nay, was it not prudent after all to give or appear to give way to the Obeah man, who had such a strange and perverse power over the minds of the Blacks? The point once gained, the rebellion in vigour, Hamel might be outwitted, anyhow disposed of; it were no sin to slay an accomplice of the devil, or to launch him from his fastness into the dingles below. "Indeed," thought he, as the reflection gained on him, "it were perhaps an act of piety and just retribution, and one which Combah himself might be induced to put in force."

Roland determined to return into the cavern; in

fact, any longer stay in his present position was evidently absurd, as he was utterly afraid to attempt a descent; and happen what might, he must return through the Obeah man's apartment, before he could regain the abodes of white men. There was a lady too in the case; a young person on whom he had set his affections, whom he desired ardently to revisit, as soon as he should have effected the purpose for which he had undertaken his journey to the abandoned settlement noticed in a previous part of this narrative. Without the help of Combah, he knew not how to assure himself of any success with this young person; for she had not as yet returned his love, nor any acknowledgment of it or for it. She would neither listen to nor even look on him, if she could avoid it; and she had been heard to express no less horror of him and his misplaced affection, than that which the Missionary himself had felt for Hamel and his office. This feeling had incensed the Methodist without at all diminishing his love, which was of a nature more passionate perhaps than refined. It wounded him besides in the tenderest part of his spirituality, his vanity; for he knew that she preferred another one, whom he was accustomed to regard as a worthless, irreligious, profane, and at the same time daring adventurer, who had scoffed at him and his religion, and

denounced him publicly as a cheat and an impostor. To circumvent this youth, and to gain possession of the lady, had been the first motives for his league with Combah. In the confusion of a revolt, successful or unsuccessful, an opportunity would be contrived by the would-be king and his followers for the Missionary to seize and carry off his prize; at least he had so bargained with his majesty. Once his, for ever his, thought he; fraud, violence, would be compensated by the offer of his hand; and his character was in too high esteem among all ranks who knew him by name and by his preaching, to suffer anything from the breath of slander. This was his idea, supposing the revolt to fail. If it succeeded, he became the right-hand man of the king, viceroy over him, as Trinculo happily observes; the keeper of his conscience, high priest, pope protestant of the island, with a beautiful girl for his wife. The enthusiast's ambition was not so immoderate as to extend farther than a desire for dominion over the consciences of all the inhabitants and their monarch; but the monarch, it seemed, had already revolted from his spiritual prostration, in listening to and expressing his wish to profit by the spells of an infidel dabbler in magic, or a pretended dabbler; for Roland was undecided as to the opinion he ought to adopt

about him, not being altogether persuaded of the possibility of enlisting fiends and demons into human service.

“ Well,” thought he, turning round to retrace his steps, “ something must be done ; I shall not be the first who has held a candle to the D—.” The very thought made him shudder. “ If argument fail, cunning, manœuvring, may do it ; at any rate I must get out of this infernal abode, cost what it will ; inquire for my servant and my horse ; and if the rivers admit of it, pursue my course to that plantation of misery where the revolted Negroes await me.”

With this idea he recomposed his features, and recommenced his battle with the bats, returning with much deliberation and more confidence to the interior of the cave. Here let us for the present leave him, and adjourn to a different scene and subject, of no less importance, to the reader at least, than the trio of persons whom we quit for the purpose of introducing the young and beautiful, the amiable and innocent Joanna.

CHAPTER VII.

————— Cytherea,
How bravely thou becom'st thy bed, fresh lily !
And whiter than the sheets—that I might touch !
But kiss ; one kiss ! SHAKSPEARE.

THE storm of the preceding night, whose violence we have commemorated, had wrecked, no doubt, many a gallant vessel and many a wayworn bark, whose crews, sinking into the waves which ingulphed them, sank likewise into oblivion, as far at least as all knowledge or certainty of their fate has been rendered evident. Others, dead in nature, may yet live in history for a year or two ; and vice versâ, the survivors in nature are all dead in history, with the exception of a few miserables whom fortune rescued from the deep to be recorded in these pages.

It was near midnight, and the storm was at its height, and every house in the island which had such means of defence barricadoed to resist it, when a rather motley group of persons, eight or

ten in number, knocked at the house of a gentleman in the parish of St Mary, and demanded the rights of hospitality. This house was situated within half a mile of the sea, at ——— Bay, and the strangers said they had been wrecked in a large canoe, with which they had crossed from Cuba; where, as they farther stated, they had been detained as prisoners by a party of pirates. The inhabitants of the house were more surprised at their being able to reach it, although to leeward of the spot where they had been cast on shore, than at their request to be received and entertained in it; an indulgence to which all persons in the island, in case of need at least, would have fancied themselves entitled under any circumstances; I should say all *white* persons. A window of the piazza was opened, and the party reconnoitred, with the help of a lanthorn, by an old gentleman from within; for being strangers and from another island, they were liable to a little suspicion; and the mention of the word pirates perhaps gave birth to an idea of the possibility of their being themselves of that calling. They presented themselves to the old gentleman's gaze in succession; and the opened window being on the lee side of the house, he could examine their features with some little attention, and make what enquiries he thought fit to put to them, so as to be heard and answered; but the vio-

lence of the storm threatening to burst in the shutters on the weather-side of the piazza, it became necessary, as a security in case of such an accident, to shut the aforesaid window ; for if the gale should once gain passage through the house, the building would inevitably go to pieces, and its inhabitants might be blown away with the rest of its contents ; a circumstance that has occurred more than once in this part of the globe. The shipwrecked men were therefore admitted, after a mutilated set of interrogatories through the piazza window, which was closed and again barricadoed, for fear the wind might shift ; and all hands immediately repaired, as if by instinct, to that portion of the building which was more directly threatened. Here the owner of the mansion resumed the labours he had evidently left but a few minutes before, which consisted in pulling to pieces a bedstead, with the materials of which he was adding to his stauncheons and barricadoes ; almost heedless of his guests, whom he had commended to the care of a Negro butler, desiring he would furnish them from the beaufet with rum or any liqueurs they might like : food was for the present out of the question, all the offices of the house being detached, and consequently unattainable except by quitting the mansion. But the new guests, too sensible of the danger which menaced them, repaired at once to his assist-

ance, and secured the bed-posts against the shutters and doors, before they attended to any of the other directions of their host, or adverted to the rest of the inmates of the dwelling, whose situation seemed yet to require some attention, after all measures of security had been completed. It was then that one of the party, looking into a chamber whose window opened upon the piazza, beheld a lady pale and almost insensible, supported in an arm chair by a Quadroon soubrette, who applied a smelling bottle of some essence to her nostrils with one hand, while with the other she chafed her mistress's temples. It was but a momentary glance in which the stranger indulged—a feeling of delicacy prevented him from gazing with too much curiosity; but it sufficed to convince him that the soubrette was a very beautiful girl, and that the lady herself was no ordinary person; she looked but little turned of thirty years of age, for her complexion was smooth, clear, and bright, as if she had never known a tropical climate; but it was the whiteness almost of alabaster, without a tinge of blood in her cheek; and as she lay in the arm chair so languid and pale, her dark hair disheveled a little on her brows, assumed a deeper hue, perhaps by so glaring a contrast. She opened her eyes at the moment that this stranger removed from his position; and seeing a man in the piazza whom she neither knew nor recollected to have seen before, uttered

a faint and half-stifled cry as she clung to the arms of the Quadroon.

“Leave me not, Michal,” she said; “leave me not. What man is that? Is the house on fire? Where is Joanna?”

The stranger looked round on hearing this exclamation, which did not escape the notice of his comrades, who crowded towards the window; and at the same moment Joanna herself appeared, in answer to her mother’s interrogatory, from a contiguous apartment; but as she approached the arm chair, she started at the sight of so many black and brown faces staring into the chamber, and would have retired again, in evident alarm, had not the stranger who had first beheld her mother, called to her in a gentle and assuring voice, that she had nothing to fear. The lord of the mansion had left his barricades for an instant; but the howling of the storm recalled him quickly to his post, whither the stranger directed his companions to attend him again, while he himself, fixed by the appearance of the young lady, delayed for a moment or two joining them.

“Who and what are you?” said Joanna, in a timid voice.

“We are shipwrecked men,” replied the stranger; “profiting by your hospitality.”

If the young lady was startled in the first instance, she was even yet surprised to hear a man with a mulatto skin speak in a dialect so very far

removed from that of the Negroes; and *he* appeared to be a little confounded at the sight of this beautiful creature. Her complexion was nearly similar to that of her mother, pale and delicate; but her figure was firm and elastic, not withstanding her alarm; and the scanty portion of clothes in which she was clad, concealed but little of its elegant outline. Her paleness might be attributed to her apprehensions, for the colour had even fled from her lips, or at least there was but enough of the rose left there to characterize her as an animated creature of this earth, who might otherwise have been almost fancied a being of another world. She was as fair as pale, with large blue eyes, from which her terror had but just chased her tears, as was but too evident from the expression of grief still upon her features; and with her hair partly bound round her head in braids, partly disordered on her shoulders, and waiving in the current of the wind, she wanted only the chaplet of flowers which the painter has given to Proserpine, to have formed the type, if not the model, for that beautiful production of the pencil of Schiavoni, where Pluto, with the air and hue of a stout Sambo, is carrying off his prize from her pastoral diversions to the realms of Tartarus. But the figure of Pluto would not correspond with that of the spectator, who still fixed his eyes on her as by a kind of fascination; for the

king of Erebus, according to the artist, is short, thick, and clumsy; whereas this sambo-coloured man was tall and well proportioned, of a most dignified and commanding manner, open and undisguised, with nothing in his appearance indicative of the robber or ravisher. He sighed as he looked at her again, and quickly removed his gaze to his companions, who were yet labouring for their host to secure the very spars of the roof, lest the hurricane should tear that shelter from their heads. The young lady turned to her mother with a view to assist the soubrette in her attentions; and the old gentleman, working like a Hercules, from time to time thanked his guests for their assistance, without which his house and household would have been, as he said, in but a very indifferent plight; for the Negroes belonging to the estate, in confirmation of the truth that charity begins at home, had all abandoned their master's abode, to guard each his own dwelling. At any other time, at least upon a less serious occasion, his costume and appearance would have excited a smile even on the negro faces which were now turned on him; for both almost bordered on the ludicrous. In the hurry of quitting his chamber at the commencement of the storm, he had put on a long dressing gown of chintz or dark-figured cotton, two-thirds of which had been since torn off by his efforts and struggles in contending against the

elements, so that it had become a sort of spencer, which gave to view a pair of black silk breeches, with large Spanish silver knee-buckles, matched, though scarcely surpassed, by another pair of the same metal on his shoes. He was some fifty years of age ; and his hair, a mixture of brown and grey, was combed from off his face with such accuracy and perseverance to form a queue, tied close up to his occiput, that it seemed to drag with it all the muscular part and power of his cheeks, forehead, nose, and mouth ; so that many of his acquaintance were accustomed to fancy he never could shut his eyes without letting go his pigtail. Indeed by the same rule he could never open them to their full capability of extension ; for the corners were drawn forcibly towards his temples, resembling in figure and effect those of the cayman ; and all he could do as to motion with these his half opened window-lights, was to wink them once or twice a day. Superadded to this rather droll part of his physiognomy, one of the aforesaid eyes was gifted with a most ominous cast in its vision, and appeared to the spectator on whom it was intended to be turned (under the influence of any passion) to be contemplating the stars, or reading calculations, (written by the imagination of which it was the light,) in the penetralia of the brains behind it. With all this singularity in his material, he displayed a most pompous though inof-

fensive solemnity in his march, manners, deportment, and address, which extended to the language in which he sometimes buried rather than clothed his thoughts. He had likewise a taste for ornamenting his discourse with quotations from the Latin authors ; and though he understood or appeared to understand the application and translation of these elegancies, his hearers were not always so fortunate, owing to some peculiarities to which he was attached of now and then altering the cases and genders of adjectives and articles. Things are not expected to be exactly similar in the old and new world. Mr Guthrie knew nothing but by hear-say of the first, having never been off the island of Jamaica but once in his life, and that only a few years back, when he was taken by a boat's crew from a log of mahogany of which he was making prize in the ocean (having seen it with a glass from his piazza window.) He had no sooner seen than he desired to possess it ; ordered out his boats and Negroes, came up with and was himself securing it, when a strange sail, which had been skulking under the rocks, sprung out upon him like a lion on his prey ; and before his Negroes could disengage him from the log, he was a prisoner. Indeed he bid them seek their own safety, for (his presence of mind not forsaking him) he calculated on the expense of redeeming half a dozen slaves as well as

himself, and had nearly lost his life for his prudence or parsimony ; the pirates threatening to fling him into the sea, until he persuaded them that the Negroes had rowed off from their own fears. However, they carried him away ; but being happily taken into Guadaloupe by a French cruizer, they were disposed of according to law ; and he, having proved his innocence, was dismissed with great courtesy, and sent home. Upon his arrival however, he found he had causè to regret his absence ; some of his buildings had been burnt, it was supposed maliciously ; and he had found his wife in a state of melancholy and ill health, owing, as was said, to her alarm respecting him, in the first place ; and in the second, to her terrors occasioned by the fire, from which to this hour she had not recovered. These terrors were revived on the present occasion. The combustion of the elements, the earthquake which had convulsed the house, the wind and the lightning, however frequent in the island, all raging in unison, had filled her with physical alarm, as well as superstitious apprehensions, to which her state of mind had left her but too subject. It was to no purpose that her husband argued with her on the folly of such fancies ; in vain that her daughter sought and practised every means of consoling her. Though not insensible, she appeared to be indifferent to both, to everything that had hitherto

given her any sort of consolation or interest. She even preferred, or seemed to prefer, the absence of her daughter, as if the sight of this her only child increased her agitations, and as if those attentions which Joanna too fondly paid her, excited only painful recollections. So, in the midst of her present alarms, she had in a manner banished her daughter to her own chamber, and accepted the services of the soubrette; and hence the tears and distress of the former, for whose presence she had only called at the sight of the strange guests with whom the storm had accommodated them, and then only from an apprehension for her personal safety.

CHAPTER VIII.

This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. SHAKSPEARE.

WE left Mr Guthrie, and his black and brown guests, still engaged in the defence of his chateau against the attacks of the hurricane. Their arrival had been extremely à propos, and their services actually saved the dwelling from being blown to pieces ; but as they had come with a very different purpose from that which they had executed, it may not be amiss to acquaint the reader with the actual primary intention of this band of worthies, which was no less than robbery.

It was no less than robbery ; but that was to have been the secondary object at which they aimed ; the first being to make prize of the fair Joanna—for her advancement, it is true, as the royal-minded Combah designed to make her queen of the island. His majesty had rightly calculated that it would be too late to make any attempt on this his bride elect, after the island should have been alarmed ; as many would take to the ships, and all who did not would crowd into the towns

for security in such an event; and it would be a business of great difficulty to get possession of her under the circumstances that would attend the latter case; and next to impossible, if her parents should once get her off the island. It were better to take time by the forelock, and secure the young lady before a fear or suspicion of a revolt should affect the minds of the inhabitants. With this feeling a canoe had been provided, whose crew were to hover on the coast, sometimes at sea, sometimes on shore, as occasion might require. They were to watch to windward for a certain signal, at the sight of which they were, if necessary, to attack the house of Mr Guthrie; at any rate to seize the young lady, hurry her away to the canoe, and bring her, not to the abandoned settlement behind Port Antonio, but to the cave of the Obeah man. This signal was to be the kindling of three fires on one of the ridges of the Blue Mountain; and we have seen how it happened that on the night in question Roland and his boy Cuffy had looked with no little terror on as many if not more of these wandering flames; which, although they had been accidentally kindled by runaway Negroes, had carried a conviction to the minds of Combah's delegates, that this was their signal, and that now was the moment for going to work. But the storm had run their canoe on the rocks, damaged it, and, as they

feared, almost beaten it to pieces. It was not without difficulty that they saved their lives; and to escape from the hurricane, they had ultimately been obliged to ask hospitality at the very dwelling against whose inmates they had meditated such horrible violence. Their plan therefore (at least for the present) was suspended, if not frustrated; for although they might have carried off Joanna by sea, it would be worse than madness to attempt such a scheme by land; nay, it would be impossible, except the whole country were in open revolt; and even then it would be no easy matter to persuade Mr Guthrie's Negroes to suffer such violence to be done to him on any pretence. These were ideas which had been communicated among the party as they groped their way in the storm to the mansion where we have introduced them. Once within it, they had little opportunity of comparing notes or hatching any fresh schemes, or even of mutual converse: they were occupied with the master of the house in counteracting the fury of the wind; and although they had had a sight of the fair creature who had been marked for their prey, there was but one of them who had been allowed more than a momentary look at her; and he, strange to say, had turned them aside from the contemplation of a person whom they had in some sort hired him to steal, or to assist in stealing. This stranger they

had brought from the south side of Cuba, where he described himself to have fled from the cruelty and oppression of a white man who wished to make a property of him. His story might be true or false ; but at any rate he had ingratiated himself so far in their good opinion, as to have learnt the purpose for which they were bound to Jamaica ; and on the plea of avenging himself on the tyrant who had oppressed him, he had been permitted, and finally encouraged, to take part with them in their enterprise ; more particularly, as he gave them reason to see that he was acquainted with the part of the island in which the scene of their affair was to be laid, and with the house in question ; although he owned no knowledge of its inmates. *He* was to assist in carrying off the young lady ; *they* to further his views of vengeance on the unjust and inhuman tyrant who had practised against his liberty and independence. But let us return to Mr Guthrie.

This unsuspecting gentleman, occupied more with the danger which had threatened his mansion from the fury of the elements, than with the fears and fancies of his wife, to which time had a little hardened him, succeeded eventually, with the assistance of his guests, in securing his doors and windows, and the spars of his house ; and, in short, enabled it to weather the gale, which abated, as we have seen, towards morning, and had

so far subsided by daylight, as to admit of the defences being withdrawn for the purposes of ingress and egress.

The old gentleman's gratitude, as well as hospitality, began now to manifest themselves more visibly in his wishes and offers of rewards and refreshments; for the services he had received from his strange guests; offers which he, with apparent difficulty only, could prevail on them to accept—that is, as to the rewards. The refreshments they declined; not thinking it advisable perhaps to continue under the roof of one to whom they had meditated so deep an injury, especially as his Negroes began to assemble about the premises, and learnt with some feeling of shame and surprise, that their master owed the preservation of his house to a band of strange people of colour. Nay, Mr Guthrie spared no pains to encrease their shame, in vaunting to them the noble and disinterested endeavours of these good men, as he called them, who had so fortunately come to his assistance, when his own Negroes had left him to the mercy of the storm.

“I tell you,” cried he, (feeling for the skirts of his dressing gown,) “that you have entailed a lasting disgrace on yourselves and your posterity; you are as bad as the white people in England; you left your master and mistress, and your young mistress—your benefactors—your natural lord, my-

self—to perish in the wind : what could the white varlets in England do worse ? You think yourselves better than they are ; Mr Roland tells you that you are, and I used to think he was right. I only wonder you did not profit by the occasion to thief ; but I suppose you were too busy with your own cocks and hens, and your pigs, your plantains, your furniture, your houses, your fine clothes, your doubloons, and your dollars ; and now perhaps you are only come to see whether the storm has not left something for you to plunder, or blown something away from the stores of which you may make prize. Are not you ashamed that I should owe my safety to strangers ? Why, I suppose it would have been the same if we had been attacked by pirates or runaway Negroes. You would have left us to our fate ; we might have been robbed, murdered, and flung in the sea, before you would have come to our help.”

This harangue was made from the steps of the piazza, where Mr Guthrie, heated, exhausted, indignant, and enraged, gave vent to his passion in thus stigmatizing the feelings of his slaves for attending to their own affairs in the late emergency, instead of sacrificing them to their concern for his. If his figure and appearance were ludicrous by the lamp light of the preceding night, they were scarcely less than diverting even to his Negroes by day. In feeling for the skirts of his

dressing gown, which had now been restored to him by the soubrette, he had discovered a woful gash in his silk breeches, over which he hung the fragments he had received, in the manner of a petticoat. His features were disfigured with perspiration, dust, and dirt; and his hands, which he displayed in suiting the action to the word, were as black nearly as those of the sable gentry he addressed. So laughable indeed was his appearance altogether, that the brown stranger in whose praise he was speaking (the person who had appeared to possess an influence over his comrades) could scarcely retain his gravity, in spite of the more serious ideas which we may suppose were fermenting in his brains, whenever the sinister eye of his host was diverted from him to the multitude he anathematized. As for the rest of the chosen few who had merited the eulogy of Mr Guthrie, they had begun some time since to effect a retreat towards the shore, on pretence of examining their boat, and securing what effects the sea might have spared them from it:—not altogether a pretence, although there was perhaps a no less important consideration which affected them in thus withdrawing themselves; namely, the apprehension of being suspected, recognised by any of the multitude, detected, and secured. Nay, one of them had overheard an old black woman, surnamed the White Fairy, (because she

was as black as pitch,) muttering beneath the piazza window, that her master need not brag so much of his new friends, who, bad as they looked, ("fit only for the John-crows,") still looked better than they were in reality; and, as the listener seemed to wince a little on hearing her oracular inuendo, she had begun to assume a bolder tone, and called out for the sailor's paper, a word significative of passport. The paper, sure enough, had been prepared; but there was no immediate occasion, according to their ideas, of submitting it to inspection and scrutiny; and they judged it better to remove to the sea-shore, for the purposes above-mentioned. Thither they proceeded without delay; leaving their comrade with the master of the house, to answer all interrogatories, and make any reconnoissance he should think proper for the furthering of the scheme which was the subject of their expedition.

Mr Guthrie saw them depart, without making any remark, supposing their intention to be such as they represented; but as soon as his passion thus vented on his slaves had in some measure abated, he began to pay a little attention to this more important-looking personage; of whom, considering his colour, he felt authorized to ask his name and lineage, at the same time that he begged his acceptance of a doubloon, in testimony of the services he wished to acknowledge. This

the Mulatto-man decidedly renounced, as well as all claim to it; declaring, that he and his comrades were no less indebted to Mr Guthrie, than he to them; but if there were to be obligation on either part, it would be of a nature very different from any hitherto thought or spoken of; and perhaps he might have it in his power, without however claiming any acknowledgment for it, to render his liberal host some really essential benefit.

“Hah!” cried the lord of the house, with a most solemn inclination of his head, at the same time stretching his dirty face, to expand his eyeballs; “an essential benefit! This is an enigma in which you are pleased to indulge, friend. What may be your means of serving one who certainly had as little title as expectation to receive assistance already at your hands? But I have no right to ask questions, whether you may or may not be disposed to gratify my curiosity. Still are your words the words of mystery; and we know we have much to fear just now from the abominably impudent and shameless opinions about liberty, forsooth, which our transatlantic cousins, in the old stupid world, are foisting upon the better-informed, better-educated, more liberal and enlightened people of the great Antilles. Are we to have a revolt? Come, you may be in the secret?”

“ God forbid,” replied the Mulatto, “ that you should fear even a revolt. Nor can I detail the ideas which I may entertain of being useful to you ; you would not credit *me*, a stranger, and a man of colour.”

“ Why, faith !” rejoined Mr Guthrie, “ you are a man of a common colour, but of no common speech ; nor can I think that you have African blood in your veins, despite your colour. Let me see, you told us last night that you came from Cuba, where you had been detained by pirates. Are you a free man ? Yes,” he continued, “ I think I may answer that question myself.”

The Mulatto bowed.

“ And your comrades ?”

“ Those who brought me from Cuba,” replied he, “ assured me that they were free ; that they keep or kept a canoe, with which they carried passengers, and sometimes goods, from Montego bay to St Lucie.”

“ And you believe their story,” demanded the other ?

“ I do not.”

“ But you can see their tale is true, as to the mischief they have suffered.”

“ Yonder is their bark, which they have hauled beyond the reach of the waves and spray ; and, as you may distinguish, even without your glass, they are endeavouring to repair it.”

“ I will at least send them tools and assistance,” observed Mr Guthrie, looking at them through his telescope ; “ and a carpenter or two, and anything else you think they may be in need of.”

“ At your pleasure, sir,” replied the Mulatto ; “ and it is time that I should also retire to them.”

“ No ! no !” interrupted Mr Guthrie ; “ sit you down here ; you shall be taken care of, at least. The Negroes will give your companions where-withal to make a breakfast. You shall be entertained here, while I go to dress myself. Sit down.”

It was in vain that the Mulatto protested against such an honour as breakfasting in the piazza of the white man : his bows either were not sufficiently disqualifying, or there was something in his physiognomy which excited the pertinacity of the buckra. At any rate, he allowed himself to be prevailed on, and took his station, as desired : while Mr Guthrie, having given the orders he had proposed, and sent down the assistance and provisions he designed for his late guests, betook himself to his own room, to depurate his person, as he termed the act of ablution ; and left the Mulatto-man alone in the hall of his mansion.

The hall opened into the piazza, and several bed-chambers communicated with the hall. The Mulatto had not been doomed to his own

company many minutes before he saw one of the doors gently open, and a pair of black eyes peep on him from a face, the rest of which was concealed behind the door. There could be nothing repulsive in his exterior; for the aforesaid eyes, as far as he divined, expressed an increasing curiosity; and the face, after a sufficient stare, gradually elongating itself from its concealment, displayed the pretty features of the soubrette. This young beauty had not failed to take notice of the stranger's figure and appearance the previous night; and if she was pleased, or rather not displeased, with them under the circumstances of that time, and the calamity that attended it, there was no reason why she should not indulge herself with a second, a daylight perusal of them. So, having heard the finale of the dialogue in the piazza, and her young mistress being by this time attired, and after having made the above-mentioned observation of the premises, she stepped fearlessly out of the chamber, and shutting the door behind her, beckoned with a familiar smile to the stranger to follow her to the further end of the piazza; where she made a halt, and turning round upon him suddenly, took advantage of the full glare of the daylight to examine his features to her heart's content.

We have before remarked, in mentioning the picture of Schiavoni, that this Mulatto was a tall,

athletic, personable man. Michal the soubrette, surveying him from head to foot, was speedily convinced of this ; and had his skin been white instead of tawny, she had taken him to be a very handsome buckra. Quadroon damsels do not look for beauty in the youth of their own colour ; their first ideas of admiration or love are devoted to the genuine white breed, either native or imported, to which they are themselves indebted, as they think, for the charms of their own persons, and all the favour they find in the eyes of those who sigh for their affections. Therefore, however natural the desire she might have to appear to advantage, even before a young Mulatto-man, nothing was farther from her thoughts than to inspire him with anything like that confidence which prompted him, after he had tenderly squeezed the hand unconsciously held out to him, to imprint a kiss upon her lips. Nothing was more unexpected, and few things had more astonished her. She snatched away her hand, and tore herself from his embrace as if she had been in the folds of such a serpent as that which stopped the march of the Roman army ; and though her tongue refused to express the feelings which this insult had roused, her black eyes flashed with so much anger and indignation, that the heart of the Mulatto for a moment sunk within him, and he felt the necessity, by looks as well as words of sup-

plication, to apologize for the liberty he had taken. There is a natural grace in the manners of persons of colour (nay, even in those of Negroes;) so that the apology to which she listened, however elegantly worded and delivered, seemed only what she might have expected; but the tone of voice was in no wise creole; and Michal, as she set him down in her mind for an impudent fellow, concluded he had acquired his gentility with his free and easy manners in other countries, and in pursuit of his business, whatever it might be. However, as her resentment began to abate with the manifestation of his repentance, she gave way to the more natural kindness of her disposition, and told him with a smile, that he was no guest for her master and mistress, but must come and breakfast at her house, not twenty yards from the back piazza; where her mother would give him plenty of coffee and roasted plantains, which were now waiting his pleasure. As she spoke this, she descended the piazza steps; and the Mulatto, convinced by her expression, and his own reflections, that she was in the right, followed her not unwillingly to the abode which she had pointed out, where he was indulged with the seat of honour, and regaled with an excellent breakfast: while at the same time he feasted his eyes with gazing on those, and the many other charms, of the pretty and amiable soubrette.

CHAPTER IX.

The purest treasure mortal times afford,
Is spotless reputation ;—that away,
Men are but gilded loom or painted clay.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE mother of Michal, a mulatto woman of some forty years of age, had no sooner supplied her daughter's guest with all he desired, than she left him to attend her sick mistress, who was too unwell to quit her bed ; she left him however with her daughter ; and this latter took the first opportunity of her mother's absence to ask by what name she was to call him, and why he had not given Mr Guthrie an answer to his question on the same subject.

“ Why, my pretty mistress,” said he, “ did *you* listen to all we talked of?” (A nod admitted the fact.) “ My name is, at least my companions called me, Sebastian or Sebastiano ; but you shall call me what you please ; I should like that you would find me a name, so it gave me a title to your kind thoughts.”

• “ No, no,” replied the soubrette ; “ you are too rude and too bold ; I shall give you no name ; you

are as impudent as if you were a white man, and an old ugly one too—for such are always the first to take liberties. I have seen now and then a young gentleman modest and timid, and almost afraid to speak to the Mulatto and Quadroon girls; but an old fellow no sooner comes into the house, than he begins winking his eyes at us almost before my mistress's face; and if her back is turned for a moment, he has some impertinent thing to say, if he has not the rudeness to lay his hands on us."

"Well, pretty mistress," rejoined the Mulatto, looking steadily in her face, "there is some motive for their presumption, if no excuse; and you ought not to grieve on such occasions, where even the insolence of white men is still a tribute of admiration, in some shape or other, to the charms of your face and person."

"Indeed! indeed!" cried the Quadroon, looking more and more earnestly at him. "Why, Mr Sebastian, you have a fine smooth tongue, and you talk indeed quite like—I know not what—like the parson on a Sunday, or like Mr Roland the missionary, who preaches every day."

"Does Mr Roland preach every day then?" replied Sebastian. "Where is he?"

"He went to windward yesterday," said the soubrette, a little surprised to hear her guest speak of Mr Roland as if he knew him.

"And for what purpose?" rejoined the other.

“ Oh, for no good !” said the Quadroon ; “ but for what he only knows himself. I am sure I wish he may never come back ; but how do you happen to know him, Mr Sebastian ? I thought you came from Cuba with those ill-looking Negroes that you brought here. Where did you ever see Mr Roland ?”

“ Ah, Michal ! Miss Michal !” replied the Mulatto ; “ I have seen him in this island, and I have too much cause to know him ; but tell me, why does he come here every day to preach ? Is it your master, or your mistress, or your young mistress, that encourages him ?”

“ My master !” answered the girl with a smile, “ my master ! he detests him ; and my mistress—poor mistress !—she can hardly bear the sight of him ; and Miss Joanna won’t have him for a husband, although he teases her and poor mistress every day.”

“ And why will not your young lady marry him ?”

“ Oh !” said Michal, “ he is nothing—a poor preacher ; and Miss Joanna likes somebody else better—a fine young gentleman she saw in England or France.”

“ And does Roland know of this ?”

“ Yes, yes ; Mr Roland knows it, because mistress told him.”

“ And what said he ?”

“What said he?” repeated the soubrette. “He said that Mr Fairfax was a villain; one who believed in neither God nor devil; that he had committed a murder, and that he robbed upon the sea.”

“Indeed! indeed!” ejaculated the Mulatto. “Bravo, my prince of missionaries!”

“But do not imagine that Miss Joanna believes it all,” continued Michal.

“Not all of it, I dare say,” replied the other.

“No, no, Mr Sebastian; she told her father—for I heard her—that Mr Fairfax was an honourable young gentleman, and never could be guilty of such crimes; but yet my master hates the name of Fairfax, and told her that this very young gentleman would be his bitterest enemy, and laughed at all she had to say of him, and told her never to think about him again; for she never would perhaps see him, or if she did, it would be in the character of a robber, come to despoil *him* of all he had yet to lose in this world. This is no secret here,” continued the soubrette; “and as you know, Mr Roland, I do not mind telling you everything about him; and my master, who cannot bear him for preaching to the Negroes, would send him away from here whenever he comes; but my mistress begs he may allowed to stay; yet she is so unhappy when he does come, that it makes my heart almost break to see her; and

there is some mystery between them that nobody else knows. Now tell me, Mr Sebastian,"—(the maid looked at him with a mingled expression of archness and tenderness)—“what you are thinking about, that you do not seem to attend to me? Some pretty girl you have left in Cuba? You are the captain of your canoe, are you not?”

The Mulatto smiled, or forced a smile for her in return, and assured her that the only pretty girl he was thinking of was herself; and he regretted his dark skin must lower him so much in her eyes, that he could gain nothing in her esteem by expressing the kind feelings with which she inspired him. The Quadroon smiled in earnest at this parade of words, which after all seemed yet in character with the manners of the speaker; but it was a smile of unaffected goodnature and simplicity; and she told her guest with a very ingenuous air, and in a no less ingenuous tone of voice, that notwithstanding his dark skin, she had never before seen such a Mulatto-man as himself; and she could not but wonder where he, who was so young, had learned to talk so prettily, and so like what she fancied of a fine gentleman. She thought he must have been educated in England; perhaps by Mr. W——? He shook his head.

“Indeed, my pretty mistress, I was educated in England, and have been in France; and what is more, I have been acquainted with the gentle-

man you speak of. Mr Fairfax is not unknown to me ; I have attended, I may say served him."

"Have you, really?" demanded the soubrette. "Why did not you tell me so before? How happy will Miss Joanna be to hear something of him! But is he what Mr Roland calls him? He is not a buccaneer, is he? nor one who will not believe in God? I know he is a handsome young man, and brave, and rich, and honourable. Well! well! one day he must marry my young mistress, and then perhaps, Mr Sebastian, I may see you again sometimes."

"Ah Michal!" replied he; "the sight of your pretty face will always cheer my heart; I could love you for having been always near the object which Mr Fairfax so much prizes."

"You could love me, Mr Sebastian?" interrupted the Quadroon; "you could love me! If we were in England perhaps. Who knows what may be our fate one of these days, by and bye? Indeed you may deserve a more honourable love than mine; you are a free man, and I am a slave."

"You shall be free, Michal, if you will be faithful."

Michal shook her head. "What would my mistress say, and my mother?" she added laughing. "No, no; do not talk about love to me; come and tell Miss Joanna about Mr Fairfax, or

tell me something for her, if you please; for Mr Guthrie will be too much on his guard, or too fanciful, to give you an opportunity of speaking with her alone; and we shall have Mr Roland coming here again by and bye. Yonder is his house, by the coco-nut trees, half way down to the bay. I have seen him sometimes for an hour together spying into the piazza at my master's with his glass."

"Spying here also I should think sometimes—does he not, Michal? *I* should, I fear, if I dwelt yonder; or what would you think of me if I did not? At least since you allow me to fancy there may be something in my brown face that is not altogether horrible to you. You would find me, Michal—you *will* find me, I hope, a faithful——"

"A faithful what? A faithful how much, Mr Sailor? By the virtue of my conscience, and Miss Michal's too, making love to the Quadroon! Why, thou naughty flirt! It was for this that you took away Mr What's-his-name to breakfast with you. Why did you not," continued Mr Guthrie, addressing himself to the Mulatto, "why did you not stay to breakfast with me, where I had left you?"

The Mulatto bowed, and expressed his sense of the honour his host had intended him; adding, "that he could not consider himself entitled to it; that he knew, or thought he knew, his proper place,

which was here, at Miss Michal's invitation ; not that he had presumed to speak to her in any terms of gallantry."

" Why, what was it then," said the white gentleman, " that I heard ? Mister—Mister——"

" Sebastian is his name," interrupted Michal.

" Mister Sebastian ! a fine Spanish title or designation indeed ! Mr Sebastian," continued he, " you are a very extraordinary personage, to say the least of you : did you acquire that nomenclature in Cuba ? Your language and manners have nothing in common with those of your associates, and little in common with those of persons of your colour in general. I can with difficulty persuade myself that I have understood aright all you have told me of yourself."

" There will be little cause for suspicion at my language or manners," replied the Mulatto, " when you are informed, that although I have a brown complexion, I have spent the chief part of my life in Europe—in England, in France, in Italy, and in other countries ; where I have had an opportunity of improving myself, by which I might have profited to a much greater extent than my appearance indicates."

" He has been with Mr Fairfax," said the pretty Quadroon, interposing.

" With Fairfax !" echoed Mr Guthrie, opening his eyes to their widest ; " with Fairfax ! What

do I hear?" A crowd of ideas seemed to rush into his mind, as far at least as the incarcerated muscles of his face allowed his auditors to divine from the little motion of which it was capable. "You the companion of Mr Fairfax? What could have brought you here? By heaven, you are spies! No fortune can have led you to this spot, it must have been design, a scheme concerted, premeditation; yet what had you to gain? Does my daughter know that this man comes from Mr Fairfax? Michal, speak."

"How can she know?" replied the maid. "She has not seen him; and it is not five minutes since I learned it myself."

"What do you know of him?" said Mr Guthrie, again addressing the Mulatto. "Describe me his person——but stay; come with me to the house: I wish even *that* vermin Roland were here. Let Miss Guthrie see you, and hear from you what sort of a being is this Fairfax who is to chase us from our inheritance, at least from a great part of it, as he threatens, and yet has the assurance (or has had) to think of aspiring to her affections. If we may believe Roland (which heaven forbid!) Mr Fairfax is a very singular person, and one who does not stick at trifles: indeed this very argument is proof of it; and Roland says he makes nothing of cutting throats either by land or water."

"How should Mr Roland know this?" ob-

served the Mulatto. "Has he witnessed any of his exploits? But let me tell you, Mr Guthrie, once for all, *I* am no spy at least, and have no design against your peace or happiness."

"No, I'll be sworn!" replied the white man. "I can trust your features, and believe you are nought but what you appear. Nay, never flinch, man: Roland has denounced your Mr Fairfax as a pirate, and waits his coming to the island to cause his arrest. He says he has half a dozen Negroes to prove what he asserts, if their evidence were to be admitted. But come: Michal, go call Joanna. Sebastian, or whatever may be your name, I shall forget neither the services you have rendered me, nor what the laws of hospitality demand of me in your behalf. I ask as a favour only, that you return with me to the house, and let my daughter question you, if she has any such desire, about your friend, or master, or companion, or whatever else he may be, Mr Oliver Fairfax."

CHAPTER X.

I do mistake my person all this while.
Upon my life she finds, altho' I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.

SHAKESPEARE.

THERE was nothing that could be called prepossessing in the costume of the Mulatto-man ; which consisted of a large pair of loose Osnaburgh trowsers, over a pair of brown leathern boots ; a check shirt, buttoned up close to the neck ; and a waistcoat with loose sleeves, of drab-coloured cloth, braided in front, and at the seams, but much the worse for the service it had done. He carried a Spanish sword, slung from his right shoulder by a brass or copper chain, consisting of oblong links, bright with friction ; and his head was graced with a huge white sombrero beaver. He followed his host with a firm and undaunted step into the piazza which he had last quitted with the Quadroon, and doffed his castor with a courteous and sufficiently submissive air to the fair maiden who advanced along the piazza to receive him ; the timid, the beautiful Joanna. She returned his salutation with a natural grace, and with little effort, although her features, pale with

grief and watching, indicated considerable agitation, anxiety, and irresolution : yet still regarding him only as an inferior, she scarcely examined his features, and indeed paid little attention to his figure; but she turned her eyes in some confusion on the floor, when her father signified that the person before her, calling himself Sebastian, was acquainted with Mr Oliver Fairfax, of whom he would be kind enough to give her some information, various reports of a most odious description respecting him having found their way to the country. Besides which, he had other reasons to inquire particularly concerning him, as he was the last in an entail that would devolve on himself in the event of Mr Fairfax's death—a circumstance bruited abroad, among the other reports. “Now, Mr Sebastian,” he added, “do you know if this last be true?”

As he said this, Mr Guthrie, who had used the privilege of his vision during his speech, of looking right and left at the same time, now turned, or endeavoured to turn, the gaze of both eyes on the Mulatto; an effort in which he succeeded without being detected; as no one unacquainted with him could have imagined, from the obliquity of his scrutinizing glance, that it was directed where it was intended. The Mulatto almost laughed unconsciously, as he replied, looking steadfastly at the lady while he spoke, that Mr Fairfax was certainly alive. A half-suppressed sigh escaped

the lips of Joanna at this piece of news ; and her face, which was previously pale as marble, assumed for a moment the hue of crimson. She seated herself on a sofa, as she said—venturing at last to open her lips—“ You have never heard him mention my father’s name ? ”

“ Often.”

“ And you attended him in France ? You have seen me—you remember me ? ”

She smiled as she put this question, notwithstanding that her blushes spread by this time over the whole of her neck ; and the Mulatto, as if inspired by the beauties he fancied her smile disclosed, answered, not without something bordering on emotion—“ I have seen you, lady ; I remember you ; I can never, never forget you.”

“ Never, never forget you ! ” cried the father, taking up the words of his brown acquaintance, and ogling him with a more and more inquisitive squint. “ Never forget you ! Why, what does all this portend, Mr Sebastian ? Where is this same Fairfax, then ? Is he here, or is he coming to the island ? ”

“ That,” replied the Mulatto, “ is a question I dare not resolve, considering the reports about him which you have mentioned : his life might not be safe, if he were here.”

“ Oh fie ! oh fie ! ” said the planter, interrupting him : “ the law cannot hurt him, if he be innocent.”

“ But he may have great difficulty in proving his innocence ; and this may be, or might be, a still more difficult moment. Has this young lady any farther questions to propose to me ? ”

He said this with a slight inclination of the head, which she returned with a languid smile ; for her rosy colour had faded faster, if possible, than it had appeared : she sat, as at first, pale and melancholy ; and the Mulatto thought he saw a tear steal down her cheek, as she replied to his question with the monosyllable “ None.”

“ What commands then,” he continued, “ has Mr Guthrie for me ? Or may I now retire to the sea-shore, to my ship, and my black companions ? ”

“ Your black companions ! ” repeated his host. “ Why, you are none so white yourself, though you speak as if you had lived only with white people. You are a very mysterious personage, Mr Sebastian, and have set my wits at defiance with the most absolute success. I really know no more of you, your black companions, as you call them, your business, or what you may be at, than if I had never exchanged a word with you. I shall really despair of my intellectual faculties henceforth : I must be an idiot, a nincompoop, a non-compos : I have lost all my common sense even. The world is a riddle to me : my wife, all mystery, tears, and fits ; my daughter in——no matter. A strange man says he is wrecked on

my estate ; helps me (thank God for all things) in a storm ; I catch him saying soft things to my Quadroon servant ; and he tells my daughter, before my face, that he will never—no, never—forget her :—a brown man in the sublime ! Pray, sir, excuse my curiosity ; and let me ask again the meaning of that high-flown sentiment, ‘ never forget you.’ What had my daughter done to merit so much distinction ? Had she overwhelmed you with obligations, when you were in France or England ?”

“ There is nothing so remarkable,” replied the Mulatto, “ in my observation. I will apply the same words to yourself : I shall not easily forget *you* ; and really, I never contemplated anything like gallantry to your servant. Now, sir, let me recommend you to dismiss me. I have other business in hand, which demands my immediate presence and attention. Let me be gone.”

“ Shall we ever see you again ?” said Joanna in a faint voice, as he turned to depart, having already made his receding bow, while Mr Guthrie pursued him with one of his eyes : “ shall we ever see you again ?”

The Mulatto stopped to say, “ most certainly, madam ;” which his host as immediately repeated, as he had done many other of his expressions.

“ Most certainly, madam ! There again !”

But the stranger was gone before he could articulate the rest of the exclamations which were crowding into his throat for utterance. Sebastian strode along the piazza and down the steps, placed his sombrero on his head, and walked deliberately to the sea-shore ; leaving Mr Guthrie with his mouth wide open, and the young lady still seated on the sofa ; her heart beating with agitation, and her eyes dimmed with tears, for which her father at least knew not how to account.

He had hardly reached the shore, whither the mortified planter watched him, (without exactly defining to himself the feelings that chagrined him,) when the sable dame, before mentioned as the White Fairy, came up to the great house with an important air, to tell her master that she knew the canoe Negroes were rogues and thieves : she had been down to the beach with plantains and cocoes for them, and spoke to one of the party, whom she knew to have belonged once to the estate of Mr Fairfax. He had been a runaway for several years ; and there was a second, whom she had seen the day after her master's trash-house had been set on fire, long, long ago, talking to Mr Roland, who sent him away with a paper ; but after he was gone, her master's Negroes said they had seen him at their houses the night before, and accused him of having set fire to the building. She said, she was sure he was the

man ; and that they had now mended their canoe, and only waited for the Mulatto, who was just gone away, to put to sea again : and *him* she believed to be only a buccaneer.

“ Why so ? ” demanded her master with amazement, while the countenance of Joanna expressed no little surprise. “ Why so, you old fool ? Your head is always full of the marvellous and the prodigious ; and I have been often-tempted to think you were half a witch in your heart. You should have had an Obeah-man for your husband, and a broomstick for your steed. Why do you fancy that brown swaggering fellow to be a buccaneer ? ”

“ Swaggering indeed ! ” muttered Ariel. “ He is no good, no worth.”

“ But why, Beelzebub ? ” cried her master in a passion. “ Have you found him out by inspiration, as Michal has done ? Here, Michal ! what has he been saying to you ? ”

Michal was coming up to the window, from which Mr Guthrie had seen her in close conversation with Sebastian ; but the black Ariel was determined to be beforehand with her, and told her master that he *swaggered*, and bid her go say to her mistress, to put her house in order for him ; for he should come at night and marry her.

“ Ah ! you old fool ; so that is what he told

you, is it? He knows what a simpleton you are. Michal, what said Mr Sebastian to you?"

"Master," replied the soubrette in an undertone of voice; "he tells you to be on your guard; yes, really, to-night and every night; and if he should come again, not to open the piazza windows for him or his companions, except you have people ready to seize them and bind them, or put them all in the stocks; and to have the shore watched, and arms ready in the house."

"And what reason, in the name of heaven, did he assign for telling you all this? Is it to ensure your affections, and your love, and all your favours?"

"No, sir," said the slave, with a deep blush, (for Quadroons blush like angels, who have anything to blush for;) "he told me that he had eaten salt with me who am your slave; and he would be cut in pieces before a hair of your head, or of Miss Joanna's head, should be hurt."

The old gentleman could not help putting his hand to his head as he looked at his daughter's shining braids; and his breath came thick for a moment, while he told her to go and see her mother, but not to alarm her. And having cautioned the White Fairy to keep her secret, or at least to say nothing more to any one else of her buccaneer friend, whom he could see with his glass already seated in the canoe; he beckoned

Michal into the piazza, which he paraded for half an hour, stopping at intervals to consult her, or at least to extract from her every word of the Mulatto's conversation, and every thought that her mind had conceived respecting him. When he had made himself master of all she had to communicate, and sufficiently arranged his own ideas on the subject, he ordered his horse to the door, and rode off, to put in execution the scheme he had planned for the security of his house and family, in case the recommendations of his late guest should turn out to be worthy of his attention.

CHAPTER XI.

A fairy world
I tread; a land of genii! Airy shapes,
Oft visible to contemplation's eye,
Roam in the midnight hour these sacred shades.

WE left the adventurous Roland, who is doomed to cut such a respectable figure in our narrative, recommencing his skirmish with the bats, as he began to retrace his steps from the brink of the Devil's Gully into the interior of the Obeah man's cave. We must use a little expedition with him on the present occasion, and beg the reader to imagine the facility with which his black allies conducted him, on no other terms than being blindfolded, through the caverns which he had himself essayed in vain to explore: how they consoled him with assurances of his boy's safety, and the recovery of his Spanish horse; and how, leading him higher up in the mountains, to cross the swollen rivulets nearer their sources, they finally introduced him at nightfall to the slaves

at the forsaken settlement, to which he was journeying on the previous night, when the storm overtook him, and our history began.

Behold him then, after rather a tedious journey on foot, standing beside the ruins of a house which had been all but destroyed by the hurricane; the roof totally demolished, and the spars of it scattered about the small surrounding plain, part of which had formerly served as a barbicue to dry the coffee which the deceased planter had been used to cultivate. The walls were partly standing, being built of stone; and within them a narrow staircase of the same materials led to a cellar, which he intended to visit as soon as he should have had an opportunity of conversing with the *Liberals* whom he expected to meet on this occasion. There were two gigantic palms to the eastward of the building, waving their feathery summits most gracefully, as the land-wind sighed its spicy breath through their plumes; and their long shadows seemed to float upon the whitened walls whenever the shafts of these noble trees traversed the rays of the moon, whose brilliant orb lighted up the surrounding scenery with a splendour but little inferior to that of the sun in more northern climes. But for the ruined mansion before him, Mr Roland, or a spectator more alive to the impressions of nature, might have almost fancied this a fairy scene, if not the very

abode of romance. It was a plain of about three or four acres, like an amphitheatre, environed by huge masses of perpendicular rocks crowned with the everlasting forest of the island, and watered by a considerable rivulet which tumbled from among them, and after flowing nearly round their bases, precipitated itself into a deep ravine, so clothed with the rank foliage of the overhanging trees, that even by daylight its further course could hardly be discriminated. There were many other little rills produced by the late rains, some of which seemed as it were to leap from their rocky precipices into the streams below, whilst others murmured unseen beneath or behind the fragments which their temporary currents had heaped in the courses through which they dis-embogued themselves. The air was filled with these accumulated and soothing sounds, so moderated by the night-wind, that they ought to have inspired in a more virtuous bosom none but the most pleasing recollections or ideas; feelings sacred perhaps to melancholy, but in no wise at war with humanity.

So thought, so felt, the Missionary; but he quickly reassured himself by calling to mind the purpose for which he had travelled to this sequestered spot. Meanwhile the Obeah man was employed in clearing a passage to the cellar among the dismantled fragments which encum-

bered the floor of the house ; and Combah, who had been for some time assisting him, while Roland was thus musing to little purpose, began to hack the fallen spars and rafters with a bill-hook, which he had brought with him to cut them into junks for making a fire ; when their ears were saluted with a whistle, which rang round the amphitheatre with such an echo, in spite of the waterfalls, that it was impossible to tell from what particular spot it emanated. However, Combah replied to it, as soon as the echoes had died away, by four distinct repetitions of the same sound, waiting at every interval, that the listeners might be enabled to discriminate the number beyond the possibility of mistake. The fourth was replied to by a fifth from the unseen tenant of the wilderness ; and a sixth, from the sable monarch elect, appeared to rouse the very rocks to language ; for a score of voices, as it seemed, shouted in all directions to answer it, as clamorous as the yell of demons might be supposed, and scarcely less startling to the ears and nerves of the Missionary. " This," thought he, " is not my signal." But the voices shouted again a second hideous and discordant yell ; and " Brutchie, Brutchie," as the watchword, was reverberated from mouth to mouth, as well as from precipice to precipice.

" Brutchie, Brutchie," repeated the monarch.

“ Brutchie ! what is Brutchie ? ” said the Missionary, half afraid it was some signal which boded him no good.

“ You forget,” replied Combah, “ that you should have been here last night ; but see, here comes your servant Cuffy, and your horse : let these be a signal for your safety.”

“ For heaven’s sake,” cried Roland, seeing it was his boy advancing, “ send away my boy ! I will have no witness to my presence here, but yourselves. I will have no spies to misinterpret me to the authorities of the island, or denounce me to the enemies of liberty and emancipation. Cuffy, begone ! Who brought you here ? Who directed you ? ”

“ Peace, peace ! ” said Combah, interposing : “ do you forget that you asked your way to this very settlement ? And did not your boy attend to your questions ? Did he not hear the account which you received of the plantation ; and knew he not that you were determined to come here ? But ask him still, if you choose, how he found his way.”

“ Come hither, Cuffy,” cried his master ; “ who was it guided your steps ? ”

“ A brown man,” replied the boy.

“ How ! a brown man ? ”

“ Yes ; a Mulatto man, with a large Spanish hat, and a gold chain to his sword, and a musket.

He rode the horse here himself, and said that he was coming to hear you preach."

"To hear me preach!" repeated the Missionary in some amazement. "A Mulatto man; who can this be? And where is he?"

"He got off the horse," said the boy, "at the bottom of the rocks below, and went over the river by some other pass; a nearer way, he said; and he bid me tell you to expect him in this Mr M'L——'s house; but the house is tumbled down; and so, if he was here before me, which he might be, perhaps he is gone away again."

"This is some mischief," said the preacher, after a pause. "A Mulatto man, and a Spanish hat, and a gold chain! I know of none such. Be on your guard, Combah! But here come your friends. I must speak to them, as I promised; for there is no law to prevent my preaching, even by night. Go, Cuffy, down the rocks again, where you parted with the brown man. If you see him, bring him here; if not, stay till I come down to you."

"And if any one," added Combah, "speaks to you in the way, say you are waiting for Brutchie."

The boy and the horse jogged off towards the winding path by which the Missionary had arrived at this amphitheatre; while the Negroes he had come to visit saluted him and Combah with all imaginable politeness; each of them shaking

hands with himself, although they did not presume to such familiarity with the Brutchie, by which they understand a king or prince.

Combah had indeed been no less in his own country ; as a token of which, the skin of his forehead had been torn off in his youth, from the setting-on of his woolly hair to within a narrow space of his eye-brows, over which the edge of the skin which had been so mutilated, obtruded itself a little ; sufficiently, by darkening the expression of his eyes, to give his countenance a character of additional ghastliness, in the opinion of some of the Whites : otherwise, he had regular and not unhandsome features. He received his new subjects, who were to swear allegiance to him, with a fine affectation of royalty ; and bid them go down into the cellar, to his friend who was busy there making a fire. But he presently called one of them back by name ; and stepping a pace or two from the Missionary, bid him take a hoe and a calabash, and fill the latter with some dirt from the grave of a child which his late master had buried about eighteen months ago. This command was intended to be a secret from Roland ; but he, having had more than one misgiving regarding his personal safety, was too much on the alert to allow any sound to escape him, which his senses could by possibility arrive at. He held his breath, strained forward his

neck, opened his mouth, and tried to swallow every whisper of the monarch's speech ; but as he heard it only in part, the words " hoe " and " grave " were all he could distinguish. They were, however, more than sufficient to renew his alarm ; fearing that some scheme was to be played off on him, if he should prove refractory with the Obeah man, whose magic rites he had predetermined to denounce publicly, should he see anything which in his ideas militated against his duty to his God, or the rights of the Christian religion. Thus shrinking within himself at the mention of the word " grave," which he fancied could only be intended for himself, he called his majesty to him, as a pope's legate in ancient days would have summoned a sovereign of Europe ; and assuming a courage which he had not, would have told him that his plans were wicked, and that he was forsaken by the angels of heaven. But the monarch put his finger on the preacher's lips, and himself burst into a loud laugh, as if to drown the words and feelings which oppressed the other for want of utterance. Still the Missionary was obstinate ; and it required some assurance on the part of Combah, to prevent him quitting the assembly, which began to increase—Negroes pouring in from all quarters of this strange amphitheatre ; some from the path which Cuffy had taken, others by a road which wound up higher into the

mountains, and others apparently from the chinks and crannies in the precipices. The Missionary looked round in some astonishment at the increase of his congregation; and yet beheld others on the tops of the rocks, moving along like demons or black ghosts (to which he compared them in his mind) across the sky radiant with the beams of the moon, seeking a passage by which they might descend into the arena below.

So little precaution seemed now to be used, that although the word "Brutchie" was from time to time echoed about, the Missionary felt satisfied that any one who pleased might have joined the assembly unnoticed, for any purpose of participation, or for the sake of obtaining evidence against him or his coadjutors, in case anything should be said or done contrary to the regulations and institutions of the island. Under this impression, his eyes were in perpetual search of the brown man with the Spanish hat, of whom Cuffy had given him the above-mentioned account; a character of some interest to the Missionary's mind, inasmuch as it baffled all his conjectures, and kept his fears and fancies constantly and painfully alive. But he had scarcely time enough to give way to these thoughts, or to experience the intensity of anxiety they would have caused him; for his companion Combah, having already convened the audience, who now amounted to at least

a hundred, in front of the dilapidated mansion, and invited his vicar elect to ascend the ruined walls, called to them in a stentorian voice to be silent, and to listen to the Missionary's prayers and preaching.

It would ill become us, in detailing the scene which followed, to trust to paper the whole of the preacher's oration. Many, if not most, of our readers would be more than scandalized at what must appear on such an occasion a profanation, at least, of terms and of ideas which they hold nearest their hearts. For all such feelings we have a proper respect; and if an expression should escape from the ink-horn (as Cervantes would say) which might involve a suspicion of the narrator's attention to the delicacy of his readers' feelings, we beg to observe on the meaning of the word *suspicion*, that it but "implies a doubt, an indecision between two or more beliefs;" and we beg our readers to select for us the more charitable conclusion which they can extract from this indecision.

The summons of the king was repeated by half the voices in attendance, and by all the echoes, until there seemed an almost Babel-like confusion of tongues, vociferating nothing that could be clearly understood, amid this chaotic gabbling, but the word *Brutchie*, bandied about until one might have thought the very rocks were deafened

with the barbarous sound, and nature herself grown weary of so odious a name. It might have been fancied at last that this was almost literally the case ; for the voices and the echoes at length subsiding, silence was gradually restored, with the expectations of the audience, until for a time no sound was heard but that of the waterfalls, and the waving of the trees ; every mind being as it were bound up in suspense, and every ear impatient to receive the glad tidings which the spiritual comforter had promised. The moon shed a flood of light on his dark figure, and on the darker one of Combah, who stood at his elbow, and whom the addition of a pair of horns would have qualified for the personification of the fiend so frequently represented by the painters of yore as attendant tempter on holy monks and ascetics. Roland began his business, as his rivals in Great Britain are wont to do, by a private hiding of his face in his hands for a time, while he leaned against the broken wall for support, the Brutchie having taken charge of his hat ; and when this had been followed by audible prayers, also usual with the orthodox, he spread open his arms, and began as follows.

CHAPTER XII.

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To any sudden flood of mutiny ;
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action or utterance, nor the power of speech
To stir men's blood ; I only speak right on ;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know.

JULIUS CÆSAR, *Act 3.*

“ BRETHREN,—You know, many of you, how I have laboured in your service ; what perils, what fatigues, I have undergone ; how I have hungered and thirsted, been broiled in the sun, and drenched in the rivers and the rains ; how I have been threatened by your cruel masters and the unjust magistrates in different towns : (one of them has sworn to put me in the stocks.) Why have I endured all this ? For your good ; to spread among you the true light, to preach the cross of God, and the value and power of faith, to save your souls from everlasting damnation. It required no common courage to tell you, which I do from my conscience, that the Christian reli-

gion, of which you may all become members, acknowledges no such distinction as that of master and slave: it makes all men equal ; I say, it makes all men equal, all brothers.” This piece of information was received with murmurs of approbation, augmenting at last into a general hurrah which lasted several minutes, so as to have drowned the language of the preacher, had he not paused. It gave almost universal satisfaction, the black gentleman at Roland’s elbow being the only individual dissentient ; and he with some reason, as it disqualified him in one word for the office and the rights of king. He pulled the preacher gently by the flap of his coat, during the tumult of congratulation below, and reminded him of his private and royal necessities. But Roland bid him fear nothing ; and as soon as silence was again secured, resumed his oratory aloud.

“ Brethren, you know the white people well. They brought you or your fathers from Africa ; they *bought* you, they say ; which means, they hired people to steal you and bring you on board their ships. They brought you here, and made you work, and flogged you. Then they took your wives and your daughters for their mistresses, to live with them ; and you know they flog *them*, if they like. Now these white men call themselves Christians ; but they are *not* Christians ; they are more heathens than any of your ancestors were,

as some of you have before heard from myself and other zealous men, who come here to show you your rights. You will perhaps say I am a white man. So I am outwardly—my skin is white; but my heart is like yours; and if that is black as your skins, so is mine. I am an exception to the white men; I have never flogged you, nor ravished your daughters.” Here a loud demoniac sort of laugh was heard from the cellar below, where, as Roland at the sound recollected, his Obeah rival was at work. However he continued his speech; for the moonlight could not betray the expression portrayed on his writhing features, except to his own mind’s eye; yet he faltered out again the words “ravished your daughters. Let me tell you,” he continued, “how the first people calling themselves Christians treated the inhabitants of this island, when they conquered it. They said that they had a right from heaven to burn them, if they would not be true Christians; and I have told you that true Christianity makes all men equal; that is, it does away at once with slavery. They burned them, they hung them, they cut their throats, they strangled them, they hunted them with dogs, until they killed them every one. There is not one of their descendants now alive, not one. Those conquerors knew it was impossible to trust people who had it in their power to revenge themselves. Need I repeat

that? I do not say that the white people here will serve *you* so : no—but had you all come with them when they first conquered the country, they would have made you do all this for them : yes, they would have put swords and guns in your hands, and told you to fire upon and to stab those who were masters of the lands ; they would have told you to show no mercy, to spare nobody, to drive the men into the sea or fling them down the precipices, and to destroy them every one, that they and you might have the houses and the lands, and their daughters and wives, for themselves and yourselves, without any fear of their being taken away from you : for if any of the people had been left alive, they might have risen again and overpowered you, or got men to come from other countries to fight for them and conquer you again ; when they would have killed you every one without mercy. But if you had left nobody alive except your friends ; I say, except your friends, those who toil for you, sweat for you, travel for you, all to save your souls from damnation,—you would have been perfectly safe ; you, and your sons, and your grandsons, from generation to generation. Now, my friends and brethren, there are many of you who are true Christians ; and such you may all become, if you will——”

“ Shed blood enough,” cried a voice in the vault

below. This cellar was immediately underneath the preacher, who, except his royal companion, was perhaps the only person near enough to distinguish accurately the stray words which from time to time escaped to the upper air. Combah looked down in a little alarm; and the preacher muttered "Perdition!" as he resumed. "The white people here are none of them true Christians, because they believe in slavery; and there is no such thing as slavery in the religion which I profess. You know that the white people in England want to make you free: there are many true believers there; one of them, a great man, rich, and a lord, says that the white men here are receivers of stolen goods, or inheritors, which is the same thing: he means that *you* are the stolen goods. Now, he is a fine, great, wise, brave man: one of his ancestors helped to conquer England itself a long, long time ago; and got for his share four great parishes in one county, with all the slaves upon it, who were called villains; and another of his ancestors went round the world in a ship, and beat the Spaniards in America, and stole all their money, almost a million of dollars; more than you can count; besides silks, and satins, and musks, and all sorts of things. He came upon them unawares, and killed a great many of them. So you see he too was a great brave man; and he has had many more rich and great ancestors and

relations, whose money he has inherited, besides all this; and he has lands and slaves—no, not slaves, poor men—to work for them and for him, in England and Ireland. He gives them no clothes, and nothing to eat; but he is a great, wise man, and very religious and virtuous; and what he says must in this instance be as true as the Gospel itself.

“What is the use of your masters giving you houses, and clothes, and fish, and grounds to cultivate? It is that you may work for them. Why do you tell me that your mistresses attend to you in sickness and old age; that they are kind to you and your children? Pshaw! it is that you may slave for them, and that the children may take heart, and hope to pass *their* old age in the same way. But remember what I said about slavery and true Christianity; if you will be true Christians, you cannot be slaves. Slaves! Did not those of St Domingo make themselves free? *They* were brave men: they had white wives when they were free; for they loved their mistresses, and shed only the blood of their oppressors. But if you were free, as the English nation wants to make you—remember—choose your own schoolmasters and preachers; do not let them send you parsons and bishops to enslave your very hearts, to eat you and drink you, and make you work for them, for fear of the Devil. No;

think of those who have taught you religion, as I have done ; who have laboured night and day to instruct you ; who have pointed out to you the road to freedom ; who have saved you from hell. Do you know that in England every man works one day in the week for a parson, who is as wicked as your masters ? and every man pays his corn, and his milk, and his fruit, and his vegetables, his honey, and his pigs and calves, to him ? And these parsons are among the people who want to keep you slaves ; you must hear only missionaries. The parsons will not let anybody there speak against them ; not a word : they catch them up, and put them in the stocks and in gaol for two or three years or more. You had better remain as you are, than have such as these for your masters. You have a right to be free ; but still remember the light I have shewn you, the true religion. If you forsake your God, he will forsake you ; and hell has room for millions yet unborn, your children and your children's children ; do not entail an everlasting curse on them ! Beware of the fire which is not quenched ; beware—beware !”

The Missionary was here startled and confounded, as well as interrupted in his unaccountable career, by an explosion in the vault below ; the smoke of which, finding its way to his nostrils and those of the Brutchie, caused the last

to shift his quarters, and the first to jump head-long down. He could not spring towards the multitude who stood with their mouths open devouring his discourse, for they occupied all the spare place as far as the ruins of the walls and beams would allow. To the outside of the ruin consequently he was obliged to turn about, and spring down into the area of the building, where, as fortune had ordained, his weight broke through the rotten boards that had formed the floor of the hall, and he fell, amidst the cockroaches and rubbish which he carried with him, into the vault below, in which Hamel and a chosen few were celebrating some orgies of a very different nature from those which constituted the externals of Roland's faith. Meanwhile, his sudden disappearance from above disconcerted some of his audience, as it did not fail to amuse others, who would have compared this his exit with that of Empedocles, had they ever heard of him or of mount Etna; or with the secession of Lycurgus, after he had favoured the Spartans with his very moral and salutary laws, not inferior in interest or humanity to the doctrine they had just heard. But knowing nothing of these ancient worthies, their admiration was limited to the descent, unexpected and unaccountable except to those who were near enough to smell the smoke and witness the accident of this modern apostle,

who found anything but a welcome among the crew which his evil genius had thus doomed him to encounter in the cellar. As soon as he had a little recovered from the confusion caused by his downfall, he heard exclamations of "Turn him out—fool—mule—what does he want here?"—and Brutchie was appealed to from below, to come and take away his preaching man. The consternation of Roland was not inferior to the indignation of those he had disturbed; for he found himself among a dozen or more of wild-looking negroes, most of them naked to the waist; or if they had garments, they were more or less stained with blood. There was likewise a human skull on a table in the midst of them, filled with earth; and a calabash, containing a filthy-looking mixture, placed beside a small iron pot which flamed with burning rum, whose blue and ghastly light, sufficient to illuminate the cellar, cast a glare of deeper hideousness on the faces and persons of these practitioners. A cow's horn tipped with brass, in all probability once the magazine of a rifleman, promised to hold more of the compound which had caused the explosion, as it had not received any damage; and although the cellar was still reeking with smoke, the combustion had not been of any importance, except that it had brought down to them this troublesome and unwelcome guest.

Roland remained in some confusion, while all eyes were turned on him, fancying that Combah had thus betrayed him ; for which his imagination quickly apprehended a sufficient cause in his having preached, or rather harangued, solely for himself, omitting to mention Mr Brutchie, much less to recommend him as a monarch to the assembled multitude, who had heard from him only a doctrine of equality and republican emancipation. Meanwhile the company still glared on him, now in silence ; and he heard with additional alarm his friend Combah above, dismissing the crowd from before the house, and telling them to dance and be happy, for there was plenty of rum, and women, and music ; and they had only to enjoy themselves for an hour, while he went to talk with the Missionary, who was gone down to eat some supper below. They gave the chief a hurrah, and withdrew farther into the arena, as he desired.

CHAPTER XIII.

Look round about ;
And when thou find'st a man that's like thyself,
Good Murder, stab him ; he's a murderer.
Go thou with him ; and when it is thy hap
To find another that is like to thee,
Good Rapine, stab him ; he's a ravisher.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

BEFORE the king elect of the island descended to the relief of his apostolic friend, he took the precaution to station a sufficient guard round the house to prevent surprise, as far at least as concerned the forbidden ceremonies about to be transacted below. The dancing and other diversions, although discountenanced, if not interdicted, by the legislature of the island and the proprietors of the adjoining lands, would not subject the partakers or the spectators of the performance to anything beyond a simple flagellation ; but the celebration of Obeah rights, or the circumstance of being present at such celebration without immediately giving information

of it, would render all concerned in or about it liable to a much heavier punishment, banishment or death. To prevent such discovery, half a dozen Negroes were stationed about the ruins, with orders to let no one approach the building before due notice was given to those engaged in it. These were some of the initiated, persons who had already taken an oath which, like that of the Eleusinian mysteries, they dared not reveal, on pain of being instantly assassinated by their comrades, besides the curse which they would entail on themselves and their posterity by such a backsliding.

Combah felt a perfect security in thus disposing them; and having heard the eboe drum strike up in the arena, and seen the black fairies begin to flit about in the moonlight, he descended to the cellar, where all rose to receive him from the floor on which they were seated round the low table furnished with the materials before enumerated; Roland standing in the midst of them, sweating with heat, fright, and horror. They made an opening for him to enter the circle, then re-seated themselves, all except Hamel, who asked of Brutchie what was to be done with Roland. The king told him without hesitation that the Missionary had not kept his word; for that he had promised to make the people believe him to be sent by heaven for their king,—he had

engaged to anoint his head with holy coco-nut oil, to put a crown upon it, and then to cry out "Long live Combah, king of Jamaica!" as he said the white people did yonder on the other side of the water: after which he was to have persuaded all the Negroes to come and kiss his (Combah's) right hand, and swear to obey him, and follow him to war upon the Whites all over the island. "Now, master Missionary," he continued, "why have you only spoken for yourself? And what is worse, why have you preached that the Negroes are all to be free alike, and have no king to lead them to fight or make laws to keep them in order? Master Missionary! the Negroes must work, some of them, or how are they to live? You do not preach like a wise man: you tell the Negroes only to kill the white people."

"No, no," cried the other, interrupting him: "God forbid that I should ever counsel them to do anything so wicked."

"So wicked!" replied Combah: "so wicked? Why, what else did you mean? Hamel, Cudjoe, Cæsar, Jupiter, Pluto, and you, all of you,—did you not hear what master Roland said? Did not he tell the Negroes to kill the white men, to take their wives and daughters, and to make him schoolmaster, parson, and bishop of the island?"

"He did—he did," was echoed around.

"Roland! you are not a man. These are wiser

and braver than you ; and to them I shall leave you, to be dealt with as they please ; for in them I put my trust, and not in you, nor in your religion, nor in any of those who belong to it. There is no truth nor reality in you, for what you promise to day you are afraid of tomorrow ; and you want only to set the people of the island fighting and quarrelling, that you may get their money and some of the white women for your share. These men are ready to swear that they will never forsake me, nor flinch from killing the Whites ; and I to swear I will never forsake them, and while I live never cease to revenge the death of any one of them a hundred-fold, if he dies by the hands of the Whites, until there shall not be a white man left in the island. Come, Hamel, let me hear and give the oath ! ”

“ Oh no, for mercy’s sake ! ” exclaimed the terrified Missionary, “ let me not be a witness to anything so horrible ; spare me the sight of such atrocities, which your religion may justify, but mine contemplates as a sacrifice to the Devil, an acknowledgment of the power of Satan.”

“ You are premature.” answered Combah. “ What atrocities do you speak of ? What have you seen or done ? We are speaking of an oath : our ceremonies are awful, but not atrocious. There have been some who shed the blood of a child to swear by, and cared not that the infant

bled to death, because it was a white man's child ; but we shed only our own. But, Roland, you must also take the oath, or——."

" Or what?" cried the trembling Missionary.

" —Or here they dig your grave."

" Gracious heaven ! my grave ! And must I drink blood?"

" Is it not so?" continued the king, looking round him. " You have witnessed the rights of Obeah, the mysteries of the enslaved Coromantins : you must swear to keep them inviolate."

" I swear—I swear," said the Missionary ; " on my knees I swear."

" Aye," replied the Brutchie ; " but you must swear as we do. You have violated the sanctuary of the Obeah man ; you have visited his dwelling ; you volunteered to preach to these runaways above, and to all the slaves, that they were free from the power of the Whites, and that I was their king."

" I will still do so," cried Roland ; " put me to the proof. Let me out of this dreadful place : I will put the crown upon your head, if you have one, and swear that you are sanctified by heaven to be their king."

" You are right, master Roland," replied the king : " you shall do all this ; and had you done it, you had before now departed in peace. You must swear to do it, and swear by your God,

which is ours, to keep our oaths and our secrets ; and you must swear as we do. Look at this skull !”

“ I swear—I swear by my God ! Let that suffice,” cried Roland.

“ No !” replied a voice from the circle ; “ he is not afraid to swear by his God ; he will not keep that oath : he must take the skull in his hand.”

“ Why,” exclaimed another, “ do you trifle with this foolish man ? If you cannot trust him, let us dig his grave—bury him. What does he here ? and what do we want with white preachers, or with white men at all ? Master Brutchie, he will certainly betray us, if he goes alive from here : we only waste time and words ; make him take the oath, or I am ready to kill him on the spot.”

“ What is there then in the oath,” said Combah, “ that you should not take it ? What ! would you not do more for Miss Jo——?”

“ Hush !” cried the Missionary : “ it is for her that I shall sell my soul, and yet shall be unrewarded with her love. I say to you, Brutchie—Combah—I came here by accident ; I sought not to penetrate your mysteries ; I was wrong, I was unfortunate ; I will do anything but this ;—Oh, stay that cruel man’s hand ! kill me not ; let me not be murdered, Combah ! I will do all ; I will swear anything ; what—how—you please.”

The Missionary was on the ground, thrown down by the unfeeling Negro who had offered to kill him, and who now stood over him with a sharpened billhook in his hand, ready to hew him to death. The blue flames of the only light by which the vault was illuminated, exhibited the horrid passion of the assassin in colours still more frightful than those with which nature had depicted it. He was of the race called Mocòs, a people known on some occasions to be cannibals, who file their teeth so as to make them resemble those of a cat, and render them narrow and sharp as needles. He gnashed these in the face of his shuddering suppliant; and his brawny arm was already raised to strike, when Combah arrested it, and bid him let the Missionary take the oath. Upon this, the skull was handed to him by Hamel; and he repeated without delay the words dictated to him; imprecating curses on his own head, that it might speedily become like that which he held in his hand, filled with dirt, if he ever mentioned to any man, woman, or child, of any colour, what he had seen this night, or at any other time, of Obeah. The skull was then deposited again on the table; and Hamel, taking the calabash containing, as was related, a filthy-looking mixture, held it close to the Missionary's face, and bid him see that it was blood—blood drawn from their own veins, and mixed with gunpowder and with

the grave-dirt of the skull. He dipped his finger in the mess, and crossed the face and the breast of Roland; finally holding it to his lips, and commanding him to taste and swallow a portion, and then to say after him as follows:—"If I lie, if I am treacherous, if I mean to deceive in any way those whose blood I have tasted, may the grave-dirt make my heart rot, till it bursts and tumbles out before my face! May I die, and never awake in the grave, or awake to everlasting pain and torment, and become the slave of the white man's devil for ever and ever!" Having repeated this, the mixture was again put to his lips: he tasted it, and sunk to the ground in an agony created by his horror and disgust.

Meanwhile, the dancing and festivity were carried on above with an increasing energy, as the rum inspired the minds and accelerated the motions of the performers. A calabash of it was handed to the Missionary below; and he learnt from Combah, that his being a Christian alone excused him from having been obliged to contribute some of his own blood to the execrable mess which he had tasted; that the same indulgence had been granted to himself, (for Roland had formerly christened him;) and that he too had taken the oath, and had been followed by all the others, while the Missionary lay in a state of insensibility. Combah added, that now, if he were

willing, Roland should tell the multitude that they must have a king, and that as they knew him (Combah) to have been a prince in his own country, there was none more worthy to be called so than himself.

The Missionary groaned with horror, but dared not hesitate; yet, as he arose from the earth, his mind was again convulsed with the recollection of what he had seen and done, and with the conviction of what he had yet to go through, in recommending and anointing as a delegate from heaven, and as a monarch, one whom he found to be an apostate from the faith which he had once sworn to maintain; one linked with dealers in necromancy, bound together by oaths of a nature so diabolical, as to bar all communion, all possibility of amalgamation, with Christian society; one, in short, at whose conduct even the miserable conscience of the Missionary revolted, after all his political aversions to any farther intercourse with him had been silenced, as they were, only by necessity, compulsion, and the fear of immediate death. Yet Combah had promised him not only his assistance, but his whole power, all the influence he should acquire, to get possession of the beautiful and unsuspecting girl, against whose peace he had practised; the gentle, the amiable Joanna. Nothing less than a revolution, he felt assured, could make him master of

her person ; and this revolution he could only effect, as he thought, by means similar at least to those he had already employed in perverting the minds of the Negroes. Combah had been his friend, his favourite, his disciple ; and until he found him in the cave of the Obeah man, his heart had been set on making him a sovereign, for his own purposes. But by seeing him with that mystical personage, his suspicions and apprehensions were influenced to a degree bordering almost on frenzy. He felt that Hamel was his rival ; and from the knowledge which he appeared to possess, and which must make a greater impression on the minds of the Negroes than on his own, he felt that his rival was a formidable one. Indeed it was but too evident, that Hamel had introduced the Brutchie to him in his cave, to disconcert the hopes of the Missionary, and display his own pre-eminence ; for he might have allowed him to depart unknown, unseen, as he had come, betrayed to the wizard solely by his conch, for which the latter might have accounted to Roland as he pleased, or not at all. But Hamel, already jealous of the Christian's influence, and well acquainted with some particulars of his life, contrived to impress his enemy with even a superior notion of his own capability, and rendered him almost contemptible in the eyes of Combah. This was a triumph too dear to the Obeah man,

to be renounced or trifled with : he had acquired, and hoped to retain, all the influence he could desire over the mind of the Brutchie. The Missionary he could have destroyed in his cave ; but Roland might be made to serve his purposes. There was a pride, an additional triumph, which he contemplated, in enslaving a white man, the enslaver of free men's minds ; of making a Christian preacher, this man whom the Negroes worshipped, and the white men deprecated for the influence he had obtained, work for him ; of bending the very soul of the apostle, as he called himself, to his own service, to do his drudgery, to dictate to the credulous Negroes what he should, by his invisible means, compel him to dictate ; and then to sink this very man to the lowest possible degradation of human nature ; to make him participate in rites and ceremonies which he loathed, abhorred, and execrated ; to damn his very soul, in his own estimation, by submission to such participation ; and for what ? To save his vile ignoble carcass from the grave, to writhe a little longer beneath *his* lash, to crawl under a heavier load of years and cares : " his soul disdained him for so mean a thought."

It was Hamel, in fact, who had first put the Brutchie upon the scheme of compromising with Roland for the delivery of Joanna. When he discovered his information to the Missionary in

his cave, it was not a mere affectation. The influence of the Obeah man was not limited : he possessed knowledge—the secrets of all ranks, and of all sorts of transactions ; he knew of Roland's passion and practices, and he taught the Brutchie how to profit by his rival's weaknesses. But we have seen that Combah had himself intentions with respect to the person of Joanna : even *he* was indisposed to keep his faith, where a woman, a beautiful woman, was concerned ; and he meant, it seems, to disappoint the hopes of his pious minister on this his fondest, his tenderest expectation. His scheme had been detailed only to the worthies who had passed the previous night at Mr Guthrie's ; and he might have had his reasons for assigning such an intention respecting her as that which we have related. Hamel had his suspicions of it, however, and was fully bent on thwarting it, if such should appear to be the Brutchie's real intention : nay, he had hopes of securing the young lady himself, (though for what purpose it might be improper here to explain,) in the event of a revolt which should effect any permanent revolution. On such a revolution his own soul was bent : his arts, his influence, his every energy, were devoted to the extermination of the Whites, or to their expulsion from the island. It is not enough to say he detested them : his hatred was charged with the recollec-

tion of the outrages he had himself endured. An African, torn from his country, chained, trampled on, herded with the rabble of his own and other nations, sold to a black tyrant—black as himself—compelled to work in irons, and whipped into desperation by his brutal master; his vengeance was yet directed against the Whites who had enslaved and thus degraded him; for he had found means long since to revenge himself, though without taking his life, on the sable tyrant who had purchased him from the ship in which he had been imported; free Negroes having the same right to buy slaves as that claimed by the Europeans themselves. He had, in fact, become the property of this black master, having shewn so daring a spirit on his arrival, that no white merchant would be concerned with him; and he had fallen in consequence, at a very low price, to the lot of one who had not the white man's plea of superiority to boast as an argument for more exalted rights. But for this purchaser, he would have gone to the Spanish mines.

Let us, however, return to Mr Roland.

CHAPTER XIV.

Some devil whisper curses in my ear,
And prompt me, that my tongue may utter forth
The venomous malice of my swelling heart.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

It may be supposed that the wretchedness of Roland's mind and person, the latter disfigured with the dirt in which he had been rolled, excited little sympathy in the bosoms of his negro associates in the horrible ceremony detailed in the last chapter. Yet Hamel, who had still farther designs on him, affected a kind of condolence, wiped his clothes officiously, and assured him he knew that he (the Missionary) meant to have urged the propriety of Combah being publicly acknowledged by the multitude as their king, if he had not been prevented by the accident which had thus hurried him so unintentionally and unexpectedly into the cellar where those only who did not choose to be Christians were engaged in preparing the oath they were bound to take to their

Brutchie. “ You know, brother,” continued he, while Roland shrunk from the appellation, and the touch which accompanied it,—“ you know, brother, all men are not of one mind : there are more religions than one ; and ours at least has the advantage of yours in being older. For I remember a white man telling me in my own country, in Coromantin,—a good man, but not a Christian,—that my religion was as old as the deluge, when people worshipped serpents. But you, none of you know anything of it ; *you* only have seen and taken our oath, an oath which makes us brothers ; would it not have been the same, if we had taken your oath ?” The Obeah man said this, feeling the compunction and disgust which his language and his grasp produced in his hearer. “ We call you brother from your participating in *our* mysteries, as you so name those initiated in *yours*. You called the mob of Negroes dancing yonder, half or more of them drunk, almost brutal idiots, engaged in sensualities solely, without mind, spirit, worth, courage, or discretion—brothers ; you said “ brethren” to them, and told them that your religion made you all alike. That is the best part of your religion ; but as I could not deserve the title by the means you have recommended to them, I have reason to rejoice at having had an opportunity of calling myself your brother, from a cause unconnected

with that which binds you to the drunken and dancing rabble yonder. Come, master Roland, from this nasty place; come with me up the stairs of the cellar. Let us breathe the sweet air, and see what more we are to do with these people before they have drowned the rest of their reason. They know me not; or if they distinguish me with you, they will take me for your convert; will they not, Roland? They will know nothing of your supper. There is Brutchie has leaped through the hole you made in your descent—he has *ascended* by it. This should be a good omen to you, as you without intending it have found him, made him, a way to mount at once above the heads of his countrymen; while they are waiting to follow one another up the steps in succession. You made this observation, brother Roland? I know that nothing is lost to the wise man. But shall you be the last to ascend the stairs in the rear of all your new brethren?—No; let me at least imitate the meekness of your example; I will follow you—I will be the last.”

Roland, staggering with heat and exhaustion, and the fatigues he had endured in his terrible ordeal, mounted the steps with a beating heart, cursing his folly, treachery, cruelty, and all the bad passions which had swayed him to this, as he now fancied it, mad enterprise. Yet he was fully

sensible to the insulting irony of the Obeah man's conversation ; and in spite of his oath, which had indeed been crammed down his throat, he would have denounced the leader and his crew, in his fever of rage, had he possessed the present means ; or stabbed the wizard to the heart, if he could have done so without a certainty of discovery and punishment. "Call me not brother," he said ; "I neither claim nor indeed merit the title ; I have no brother, sister, parent or friend ; I am alone ; and better had it been for me to die beneath the weapon of that butcher who threatened me, than to have saved my life by——"

"Hush—hush !" said the Obeah man in a gentle voice, degenerating at last into a whisper ; "that skull—you remember—it was a child's : that child, Roland, was a victim ; it came to an untimely death—I have seen the hand that killed it." (The Missionary's fingers were convulsed, and his heart knocked against his ribs.) "It was killed by mistake ; yet the hand that smote it was raised to shed blood, though not the blood of that child."

"Peace—peace !" sighed the Missionary, in a stifled and half-murmured tone, fearing to be overheard ; "in the name of your God, be silent."

"Of my God !" said the Obeah man. "I have done. Here, Brutchie, is your great ally. Your multitude are half intoxicated by this time ; and

your friends are gone among them, to set their minds at rest on many points. I shall still wait here, and watch the stars a little longer. Do you as you like : your Missionary will say all you please."

" Ah!" thought the Missionary, as he turned from him ; " I had not calculated on what has happened. These fiends in human shape are not the fools I took them for. I reckoned indeed on bewildering the minds of my hearers, and of reserving the power I should acquire to make my own terms with Combah. I have outwitted myself, and been still more outwitted by that juggling and treacherous Hamel ; and so degraded am I, that if they but tell my story here among this crew, I am undone for ever, even with them. And of what value shall I be to Combah ? Yet—yet," (and he ground his teeth together, as the idea burned through his mind) " I may have vengeance. Thanks to the white man's laws, these wretches cannot give evidence against me ; nay, could they, who shall believe them ? I have trusted no white man, woman, or child ; my dearest victim knows me not still, and she yet thinks me what I seem to these. I can denounce them, and spurn their execrable oath ; and then—what am I ? How shall I gain Joanna ? Must I see her the wife of another ? And must I for ever be the slave of those who refused to send me here ?

Must I do their work, to gain their approbation?—
A set of hypocrites!”—

But here his reverie was interrupted by his companion Combah inquiring if he was still able to address the Negroes a second time, according to his promise; and if he would argue them into a belief that they must have a king. “For they are already so disposed,” said he; “you heard them call me Brutchie. They have kings in their own country; and they will be nothing without a king.”

“Combah,” replied the Missionary in a melancholy tone, “you have ruined and undone me. I must do what you expect of me, what I have promised; though I think it better that you should put off, till the next Saturday night, the business of placing a crown upon your head. Besides, they do not crown their kings in their own country; and after the indignities I have endured, my strength fails me. Yet if it must be so, let the drum be stopped, and that profane dancing; and call the attention of those who can attend. But I will mount no more upon that ruined building; let us walk into the midst.”

A shout from Combah awakened the curiosity of the multitude, and a second silenced the drum. The word Brutchie, again bawled and howled around in acknowledgment, and in token of respect, produced an effect like that of the lyre of

Orpheus, when he visited the abodes of Pluto and his bride, suspending all the operations of the Pandemonium. Even the demons of the Obeah cup relaxed from their exertions in poisoning, as it were with the breath of pestilence, the minds of every coterie which they could get at; the furies of the rum calabash allowed at last their victims to sink upon their grassy beds; and all was enchanted into silence, except the streams which ever flow, and the fragrant winds that blow. Mr Missionary had raised his head and cleared his voice, and the word “Brethren” was on his lips, when a sable orator from the crowd interrupted his words by roaring out with stentorian might,—“Brutchie! Combah! I long to see you king,—so you send away the parson.”

“Why so, you drunken fool?” replied his majesty. “Hold your tongue, and let master Roland speak.”

“No more, if you please, master Brutchie; I long to see you king, because then I shall work no more, no more be flogged, no more be preached; I shall have my wives to work for me and find me my plantains; and I can sit on a rock or on the soft grass, and cry *swish*, and whistle. Oh, master Brutchie, be king: don’t have a white parson; he will want all the women and young girls for himself, and be preaching hell fire and duppie to make us work for himself and all his little ones; for he

will want fine clothes, and money, and horses, and sheep, and pigs, and cocks and hens, and all other things besides, and a fine house ; and we must all work to give him these. But you will have your own wives to work for you ; and you will want nothing from us but to fight sometimes for you, and go to war for other people's plantains and cocoes, if there should be no rain here, or if these hurricanes come too often and sweep everything away from this part of the island. And then, Brutchie, when you get strong, we can make war on the white men, and catch king George's ships when they come into Port Antonio, and Kingston, and Annotto Bay, and more bays down to leeward, and make them pay salt fish and herrings, and osnaburghs and pennistons. Oh, Brutchie, Brutchie, take away the missionaries ! If you must have people to preach, why can't the Negroes preach as well ? as well as the white skin man, who only preaches for the women, that every one must have a white husband, and must not work for him, but the man must slave for her ; a pretty thing ! I know I'll *wallop* my three wives if they don't work for me."

"You wallop your wife !" cried another, a female voice. "I hope Brutchie will wallop your back. Hold your tongue, you drunken fellow ; I am ashamed of you. Master Brutchie, please make the Missionary speak again ; he is a good

man, and preaches the true Gospel for black women as well as Quadroon misses and white fine ladies, that turn sick if the sun shines in their green cat's eyes. We have no more business to work than they have ; and I hope to see the time come when the white men shall work for us, and bring us silk gowns, and muslin, and umbrellas to keep the sun from burning our complexions as well as theirs ; and when we shall have horses, and sumpter mules, and kittereens, and Madeira wine, and porter ; and wear white nice pretty shoes, and white kid gloves, and pink handkerchiefs ; and play the music in the buckras' houses, and dance with the parson and all the fine young gentlemen that come from England and America. Please to make master Roland speak again ; I love to hear him preach."

This speaker had the misfortune to be interrupted, as well as the last, (although she had pretty well exhausted the topics of her eloquence,) but in a different way from that in which the honorable *gentleman* had been cut short. A mutilated shout was heard from the bottom of the rocks, where Cuffy, having watched till he was tired, had long since fallen asleep, in spite of the temptations of the drum, which only served at last to lull him into repose. The horse had been allowed to wander at liberty in search of pasture, which he found among the rocks on the river's

brink, without straying to any great distance, Cuffy having only taken the bit out of his mouth, and tied the bridle about his neck for security. In this state the animal now made his appearance, followed by two men who had in vain attempted to secure him, and by Cuffy, awaked from his almost Lethean sleep, roaring out in the rear to the multitude to catch his horse. The beast ran headlong into the crowd, as if he were pleased to shew the sweetness of his disposition, and put every human being he came near to the rout, until he entangled himself among some rocks, and was secured, much to the satisfaction of Roland, who would gladly have remounted him and rode away; but ere he could do this, the two men who had surprised the horse and the sleeper below, having found out the Brutchie in the moonlight, came to tell the cause of their pursuing them; which was no other than a suspicion that they belonged to some white man who was watching the Negro performances.

“Give back the horse to the boy,” said the king rather impatiently; “and tell me who you are—what—how—wherefore—and whence you came to this place;—what has happened, Quamina? And who is the other—Quao? Diego?”

“Master Brutchie,” replied the first of the Negroes whom he had recognised, “the canoe broke upon the rocks at —— bay last night in the storm, and we could not mend it till this morn-

ing: we saw the fires, and we got into master Guthrie's house."

"Ah! hah!" cried the Missionary, overhearing what was said, though in only a half whisper. "Master Guthrie's house! What had they to do there?"

The Negroes looked anxiously at Roland, of whom they had some previous knowledge, a little startled at his white face; and wondered in their turn how he came there, and what he had to do at such a place. But Combah, without expressing any apprehension for the consequence, demanded, in a sufficiently loud and imperious tone, "What news of the buckra woman?" adding, before he had given time for an answer, "You were wrong—we made no fires; but what have you done with her?"

"We left her where we found her," replied Quamina; "for a brown man whom we brought from Cuba advised us to put to sea again next day, and made us believe that master Guthrie suspected us, and was prepared to seize us or kill us, if we attempted anything more to-night."

"A brown man!" said the king in some surprise.

"Yes, master Brutchie, a tall brown man with a large Spanish hat."

"Why—this," said the Missionary, "must be the same who came hither on my horse."

“Is he here then?” said Quamina in a low tone of voice. “Hush! catch him, master Brutchie, if he is here: for he is no good man; he is a deep rogue, a most powerful desperate villain: he ran the canoe a second time upon the rocks on purpose to day, and laughed at us when he saw the water come in at two great holes in its bottom.”

“Laughed at you!” repeated Combah: “laughed at you! I think indeed you deserve to be laughed at; how many were you?”

“We were eight men,” replied the Negro, quite abashed; “but one man was of Sebastian’s side, and two more were of neither side, and would not help us; and so he beat us, and flung us about, and tossed Diego and myself into the sea; for we had no arms loaded but what were so wet that the gunpowder would not go off; and our machets, which lay in the bottom of the canoe while we rowed to windward, he threw into the sea before we thought of using them.”

“He had a sword?” enquired Combah, looking at the Missionary.

“Yes, he had a sword,” replied the Negro, “with a gold chain; but he did not draw his sword. We had saved him from Cuba, where he was a prisoner, and had escaped from pirates; he knew the bay where we were to land—so he told us—and Mr Guthrie’s house, and all the country

round about : and so he did ; but when he ran our boat a second time on the rocks, he told us he would not betray us, because we had assisted him in his necessity ; nor would he injure us, except we offered violence to him : he bid us begone to our masters and surrender ourselves, or mend the canoe again, and take ourselves off the island, if we pleased ; but he threatened, if we dared to attempt anything against Mr Guthrie or his wife——”

“ His wife ! ” cried the Missionary, interrupting the Negro’s speech. “ What would you attempt against his wife ? ”

“ His wife was sick in bed,” replied Quamina.

“ I know it—at least I thought so,” said the Missionary : “ but had she been well, what meant you to have done ? ”

“ Roland, hear me,” said Combah, intending to answer for his delegate. “ It was Joanna they were to bring away.”

“ Joanna ! ” repeated the Missionary, half choaked with the various passions inspired by the sound of her name, and the idea of the fate which she had escaped. “ Gracious heaven ! Combah, is this your faith to me ? Is it for this that I have sunk myself to a level with the beasts of the field, or the more brute beasts who are preached up as the best part of humanity.” (Then turning aside.) “ Villain ! infamous villain ! May

the curse of his own God and mine rend asunder his black and marble heart !”

The latter part of this speech was inaudible to those with whom he was conversing, being more in the nature of a soliloquy than belonging to the dialogue. Combah heard only an indistinct and grumbling murmur ; but though he suspected what was passing in the mind of his devout friend, he was perfectly unabashed, and addressing himself again to Roland with the greatest ease and indifference, merely told him that it was part of their bargain that he, Combah, should deliver up Joanna to be the wife of his friend ; and how could he do so until he had got her into his possession ? “ But these men,” he continued, “ have been too soon, too rash—we were not ready. They would have brought me the white woman, and I should have had the glory of giving her to you. But now, if we have not alarmed Mr Guthrie, some new plan must be devised : for the canoe is spoiled, and this brown man has perhaps gone to make the governor acquainted with the scheme we had in view.”

“ The brown man,” replied the Missionary, still trembling with rage and mortification, “ is here—so Cuffy says ; but Combah—Combah !—how can you persuade your conscience it was right to send these men in secret, without my knowledge or

concurrence, to steal the woman you had sworn should be my wife?"

"She shall be your wife: we wanted only more men to go down to leeward—to Hanover and Westmoreland—to fix the day for rising; and the first signal for it here was to be the seizure of Miss Joanna, and the fires on Portland Ridge and the Carrion-crow Hills. But, Quamina, what did your brown man threaten, in case you attempted anything against Mr Guthrie?"

"He threatened," replied the other, "to have us every one hanged, and said that Mr Guthrie was on his guard; that he would watch us, and send notice to the governor."

"Fools!" cried the monarch again, "why did you not seize him, and hurl him into the sea, or bring him here?"

"Here!" said the Negro, as if surprised: "why here? We might have brought him to Hamel's cave: we knew only of the meeting here from an old blind man whom we found sitting at the mouth of it; and when you call us fools, Brutchie, for not seizing this Sebastian, I can only tell you, you do not know what you say: if you were to meddle with him yourself, you would find him a match for you, and more. Diego and myself closed with him, to get his sword from him; but he seized us, and knocked our heads together as

if we had been two cats, and then flung us, one with his right hand, and the other with his left, into the sea, as if we had been two rotten coconuts. Quao and another had got hold of Nimrod, the black man we call Drybones, who took Sebastian's part; but he came to his help as soon as he had flung us into the water, and threw Quao down on the rocks with such force that he lay there for dead; and the other man he took up in his arms, and almost squeezed the breath out of him, holding him in the air like a parrot, while he bawled and prayed for his life until he could speak no more."

"And what then?" said Combah, looking inquisitively at the narrator of Sebastian's feats: "what then? Was this brown man the master of you all?"

"He ran away then," answered the Negro, "with Nimrod into the woods, and we followed them; but they escaped us. We got to the cave where Hamel sometimes lives, and there we found an old black man sitting on the rock, who said he was waiting for him (Hamel) to come and cure his eyes; but it would be long first; for a boy with a horse had told him, that he for whom he waited had gone into the woods and across the rivers with a white parson, to make him preach to the Negroes here. We came by the Negro path, not by the horse road; and so, as this

white man says, Sebastian may have got here before us, and may be now concealed among the crowd, listening to what is going on."

During this explanation the drum had been resumed with the rest of the festivities ; and Combah, unwilling that the communication respecting Sebastian's conduct and escape should be imparted to his followers, had gradually led the Missionary, and his own delegate Quamina, to the edge of the rocks, where the river, and the road winding beside it, began to descend into the ravine before described, away from the rest of the party. The conspirators now danced and drank, and again tampered with the miserable wretches whose passions had been first inflamed by Roland's harangue, stirring them up with mad and vain speculations about liberty and revenge, to undertake or promise to undertake adventures for which they were utterly unfitted in every respect save in having the power, the manual capability, of cutting throats, or otherwise putting to death those of their supposed enemies who should have the ill-fortune to fall into their clutches. But Combah was affected with a very different feeling: the tale he had heard of Sebastian, his having wormed himself into the secret of his companions, his conflict with them, his threats and his escape, led him to apprehend a discovery : an event that would not only be fatal to his hopes of

royalty, but deprive him of all the chance he might ever have possessed of obtaining the white lady for his wife.

Roland likewise was not much less tormented with fears and anticipations which, crowding on his mind, chased away for a time even the bitter recollections of the horrors and indignities he had this night endured. Thus harassed in mind, he was totally useless as a counsellor to the monarch elect, and even incapable of forming any plan for his own safety, in case the treasonous practices in which he had taken but too important an interest, should come to the knowledge of the authorities of the island. Recourse must be had to Hamel—to a Negro conjuror! “Death and misery!” said the preacher to himself, humiliated more deeply at the thought: “must I owe my safety from the *white* men to this abortion from human society? this devil, fiend, juggler, who cannot fail, if he have the power, to expose me, mortify me, deliver me up as an offering, when he shall find occasion and need, wherewith to ensure his own reprieve or escape from justice. I am indeed undone, and wish that my career of vanity might here be closed for ever. Yet I was not born wicked, nor have I crimes to answer for, unless those actions are crimes, which love of beauty, idolatry of women, drives us all in turn to venture on. Then, who sees not that all is treachery, selfish-

ness, hypocrisy, in this execrable world? Power—interest—wealth—women! Ah! master W——, S——, B——, and the whole tribe of you,—I know you—I know you and all your *secret* motives. *Secret*?—perdition! glaring as the sun: the whole world knows you, loathes you, despises you, as I do from my heart; and your mob screens itself beneath the mask you first invented for yourselves, from the confession, from subjecting itself to the exchange, the reciprocity of the mutual curse you breathe for one another. Wretches! you but deceive yourselves; you are all an abhorrence. Yet I will not despair. Can not I turn you to account?—But whither am I wandering? Yet guide me, Spirit of Heav——”—Heaven, he would have said; but Combah having sent for the Obeah man as his fittest counsellor, that black gentleman interrupted the farther soliloquy of the Missionary with the remarks which will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

How shall we laugh
When the pale coward slaves, to us, remote,
Direct th' uplifted hand, th' imploring eye !
Their conscious groans shall feed our great revenge ;
Their endless woes our wond'rous wrongs repay.

BRYAN EDWARDS.

“ DOES Roland falter ?” said the wizard : “ the holy and virtuous minister of God ! Fear not for yourself ; there are too many of your religious people in your own country to take up your cause. Though you were stained with ten thousand crimes, and all the treasons ever told of the Coromantins and of all the other Negroes whose bones lie under this soil, far from their native land, there is no one here dare punish you, while you give away or sell your Bible-books, and preach the Methodist religion. Though you were convicted of rebellion and murder, of rape, incest—hear me if you please, master Roland—though you combined with thieves and assassins, preached murder to them, and drank blood from an Obeah

cup in token of your contract with them ; and though all the inhabitants of this island knew it, believed it, and could prove it,—aha ! none dare prosecute you ; or if they did, and proved you guilty, they dare not punish you. They would condemn you, and send to England for advice, or let you escape ; and if they sent to England, are there not thousands like yourself to vindicate you, to prove you innocent, to swear your crimes are imputations, lies, inventions ; and that you are, were, and must be, a holy, virtuous, man—a martyr, at the worst ? Ah, Roland ! yours is a fine religion ; but what will become of *me* ?—The very mention of mine damns me, with your great friends, to everlasting fire and torment—to a level lake of Scotch brimstone. I should be hung and quartered, and my head stuck on a pole, or on the top of a mill-house—the Christians one and all would gibbet *me*—although I had never committed one crime beyond that (if it be a crime) of selling or giving away puntees, feathers, or glass bottles, to scare thieves from the orange or shaddock trees. Would the white men in the island believe I could be innocent of deeper crimes ?—I tell you, master Roland, when you preach the mortifications, the perils, the hardships of your religion, you preach what is anything but true. You have the finest religion in the world, as far as I have heard ; for you eat and drink all day, and

make love to all the women yourselves, and to all the Quadroons and Mulatto girls here, if you like; you have got (at least the parsons here have got) houses and lands, and slaves, and wives, and everything the other white men have, without working for them. They give them to you as long as you live, for going to church on a Sunday, and preaching out of a big book. And what do I get, master Roland? Curses, execrations, hanging, quartering, and the like; and yet I preach no crimes, no murder, no violence, no rape. My own wrongs I have a right to revenge, because the law will not do me justice. I was stolen by Christians; the very man who stole me became a Methodist; I asked him, when he wanted me to go to a church, if he would buy my freedom for me? He offered me his blessing!—Now, master Roland, fear not for yourself: no white man knows of your being here. Go down again to your house; learn from Mr Guthrie all he has to tell; or from his wife, who has no secrets from you; or from his daughter, if she will——”

“No more, no more,” interrupted Roland. “If you have any knowledge, as you once boasted, superior to that of your companions, or of the Whites, tell me, tell Combah, who is this Mulatto man with the Spanish hat?—this Sebastian, who seems to have the strength of three or four men, and throws your countrymen about as if they

were dogs. Tell us, where is he, and what does he, and how dared he to take my horse to bring him here? Do you know him?"

"Aye," said the Obeah man; "I know him well; and I warn you to beware of him. Tempt him not, touch him not, provoke him not: he is your bitterest, your most dangerous enemy."

"And why?"

"Because you have injured him."

"I never injured a Mulatto man," said the Missionary; "why should I fear him? Does Combah know the man?"

"If Combah knows him," said the wizard, "he will mind my caution. This Mulatto, as you say—for I have not heard of him except from your boy and from yourself—is no ordinary person, it seems; but a brave and desperate fellow. Keep clear of him; avoid all intercourse with him; and you are safe. Let not your vanity interfere to solicit for you any connexion with him, however trifling.—But see, Combah! the stars are beginning to look pale; the daylight must be fast approaching. If Roland will say anything more to your assembly here, it must be done at once. These men should be sent down to leeward—this Quamina and Diego; for though they were not a match for Sebastian, they are faithful. There is no time to lose: the governor will be alarmed, the soldiers sent among us, and martial

law proclaimed. Roland must seize his bride at once, or let you seize her, before another day passes by. Seize her, Brutchie, but use her well."

"No, no;" said Roland, interposing; "leave that business to me. If she is to be mine, let me at least win her. Hamel knows that I shall never be suspected; I have admission to the house at all hours; I can sleep there."

"Yes, yes," said Hamel, "on pretence of being at hand to give assistance in case of an attempt. These holy men know how to value the laws of hospitality!"

This latter sentence was of course not intended for the Missionary: he neither heard it, nor felt any compunction for harbouring so horrible an intention. Brutchie admitted the propriety of the scheme; for he too had his own private views. But he was resolved that the crowd should yet acknowledge him as king in the presence and by the address of Roland; and Hamel, feeling an interest also in seeing his own prediction respecting him fulfilled, had adopted a similar resolution. The prediction had in fact been already fulfilled, for the rabble had saluted him as Brutchie; but the crown was to be placed on his head, and the coco-nut oil poured on it, and the people were to kiss his hand and cry "God save him;"—a farce that tickled the fancy of the Obeah

man, and the vanity of the would-be king ; the first being delighted at the idea of seeing a white man, a Missionary too, a preacher of the religion by which he was denounced, doing the first of all honours to a black African, and crowning him king over the island, the Whites, the Christians, and himself ; and the latter participating perhaps in these feelings, and being swollen besides with the conceit of being restored from slavery to royalty by his own exertions, and of having acquired a power of revenging himself on the robbers of Europe who had dragged him from his native soil. Natural ambition, and the prospect of sensual gratifications, combined with these feelings, and led to the performance of the scene we are about to describe.

The day had fairly begun to dawn, and the stars had faded in the blue sky, which now assumed a rosy tinge, rendering the pale moon still paler ; and the pigeons were already winging their way, as well as the parrots, across the amphitheatre among the rocks, the scene of all the noise and bustle we have related ; the crickets were even clearing their throats ; the land wind still breathed its fragrance at intervals, and shook the dew drops (with every one of the sighs it seemed to heave) from the feathery branches of the gigantic palms already noticed, beneath which it was the royal pleasure of Brutchie Combah to be

dubbed a true king. It must be confessed that his majesty's loyal subjects were not in the very finest trim or costume for the occasion ;—but men are men ; and subjects, though lords and dukes, are no more. Besides, his majesty meant to create a batch or two of these on the spot, in the fashion of him of Hayti ; and would have made a due selection for the occasion, if it had not occurred to him that many of those he most valued were too drunk at the moment to appreciate or even to understand the nature of the honours which were to be thrust upon them : some were also ingloriously asleep, lolling their heads in the laps of the sable nymphs in whose honour they had been dancing all night ; others sprawling on the grass or on the white barbicue ; two or three couple quarrelling or scolding ; and a few merely seated as spectators of those who still kept up an eternal jigging to the monotony of the eternal drum. The rum was all expended, not a drop even being left to drink to the long life of the new monarch, as soon as Roland should have consecrated him : but they had saluted him already in that fashion during the night, and a draught of the river might suit the occasion as well as rum—the latter, as Roland observed, not being usually drank at the courts in Europe ; and water might in some sort revive and restore the senses of the company. A crown had been prepared, made by

a Negro blacksmith, in the fashion of that of Lombardy, every alternate spike being gilded, and the whole surrounded by a cincture of alternate blue and white glass beads. The holy oil too was produced by Hämel, from whose hands the Missionary refused to take it, intimating that he had received enough from his unchristian fingers. It was contained in a small glass phial, and was handed round among those who might perhaps be denominated the king's courtiers, and who in turn peeped into it like so many parrots into a marrow-bone, and then applied it to their flat noses for farther information as to its sacred or divine qualities. However it came back, without having caused any audible remark, to the hands which had first produced it, every Quashie being sensible that silence would at least save him from exposing himself on a point of which he was as profoundly ignorant as the high priest who was about to perform the ceremony.

The wizard was however rather incensed at the objection started by the Missionary, and said to him in an under tone—"Brother! there is nothing in the colour of this; take it; it is not red, nor need you put it to your lips."

Roland gave him a look of horror, and waved to him to keep it for himself; for they were on their march across the little plain, from the brow of the dingle where the river disembogued, to-

wards the palm-trees which stood (and which yet stand) to the eastward of the ruined house. No Triumph of Bacchus or Silenus, the living monuments of Titian, Poussin, Rubens, or any other artist, would give my readers an idea of this absurdest of all absurd processions; although, as in those master-pieces of art, which many will call to their recollections, the chief part of the performers are represented drunk. But theirs is the mirth of drunkenness, hilarity, and joy; whereas our sable satyrs, wanting the cloven hoofs and the tails, were no less sleepy than intoxicated, and staggered along like wounded and fainting soldiers in a retreat, now and then tumbling against one another, now and then tumbling down altogether. Silence had been proclaimed, and all had been summoned to attend; but the first was not so easily obtained as it had been over night; and some seemed to have fallen into their last sleep, and could not be roused even by pinching or slapping. The drummer too, as if he had been smitten with the *chorea sancti viti*, and bewildered between drowsiness and drink, could not pay that implicit attention to the royal orders which they deserved, but kept up a most persevering though less fractious rub-a-dub, as it were in spite of himself, or because his hands continued to wriggle, whilst his brains were entranced by the goodly vision before him and the o'ermastering rum within him. He sat drumming in his

sotto voce, with his mouth wide open, and his eyes about half open, except during those intervals when he could raise them into a stare, while the procession past by him. First came half a dozen women, dancing for a few yards at a time, then walking as many, but in their walk knocking their elbows against their hips, which they wrenched forward with a grace which none but Hottentots could surpass, to render the contact more elegant and insinuating as well as more easy. At the same time they sang extemporaneous songs in praise of the new king and the Missionary, which, all adapted to the same tune, and all delivered in unison, consisted of various and distinct effusions, each of the prophetic beauties giving vent to her own particular inspirations; so that the whole produced a confusion of words and noises, from which it was as difficult as useless to draw any meaning. To give some idea of their poetry however,—one, for instance, exclaimed—“No more fum-fum*—oh, oh!”—while another sang, “King George will send for me, oh! for me, oh!”:—and another warbled—

“The soldier Buckra fight for we,
 The sailor Buckra too—oo;
 The Buckra Parson make we free,
 And drive the Scotchman in de sea—
 Oh, oh!—oh, oh!
 Brutchie, Brutchie, oh, oh!
 Broder to king Georgy—oh!”

* Flogging.

But it would require the subtlety of an alchemist to analyse more than one of these Pindarics out of the six—that is from end to end. They were linked into one another with some attention to melody; but of harmony the nymphs who sang them had no notion. After these came about a dozen men, clapping their hands in time with the singers, and sometimes dancing a step or two, and yelling out “Brutchie Combah!” These were all drunk in different degrees, and all variously affected,—some laughing, some almost crying, solemn, lyrical, and ludicrous; some hiccupping; and one or two with uplifted eyes and dilated nostrils attempting a psalm. One of them carried the diadem, and would have placed it on his own skull more than once, if Hamel, who walked behind him, had not rapped his knuckles with a bamboo-staff, as often as he observed him guilty of such impiety and profanation. The king was by the side of the Obeah man; and Roland, disfigured and dirty, with his hat crumpled, and his hair sticking out in all wrong directions, walked on the other side of his majesty, with a small bible in his hand, which he had drawn from his pocket. He was wofully cast down; and yet his majesty, walking between his two confessors, looked perhaps more like a culprit tramping to the gallows than himself, and much more so in fact than a monarch marching

to a throne. The rear of the procession was brought up by the rest of the Obeah conspirators ; some smoking short pipes, some laughing and floundering about, romping with the women, and singing songs (none of the chastest,) and it closed by forty or fifty rabble in Osnaburgh frocks, being all who could be awaked or brought to service.

They reached the palm-trees ; and having faced about, the Obeah man spread his arms towards the east, from which the day was glimmering. But Roland, already scandalized, called out to him to forbear ; and the black ladies, always inclining to his side, told the wizard it was not for him to preach when the white parson was there ; a remark that only excited a smile from Hamel, who surrendered his claims (if claims they were) most courteously to his rival, and begged him to make haste, and finish before the sun should rise. The Missionary began a prayer, in which his own feelings, getting almost the better of his discretion, led him away from the subject he had undertaken, to invoke peace and tranquillity for himself—for he could still pray ; but quickly resuming the recollection of his work, he asked his drunken audience whether they would like to have a king, if they were free, as soon as the governor should go away : because, if they would, Brutchie Combah was the man for

them, as he was brave and wise—he would fain have been able to add, religious. The Missionary repeated the question more than once, without receiving any answer; and as the audience, collectively at least, seemed on this occasion deaf or dumb, or both, he bethought himself of asking them individually whether they approved of his proposition. The first he appealed to, having heard him verbatim and seriatim, replied only with a wild stare, and the monosyllable “sa,” (sir.) Roland gave him up for a fool, and attacked the next, whose answer could not be made to extend beyond a hiccup. A third whispered—“Yes, if master Roland please.” But Combah, becoming impatient, snatched the tin crown from the knight or squire who had squeezed it out of shape in his drunken efforts to place it on his own head, and tried, though with very moderate success, to ram his own woolly skull into it. But it had become so bent into salient and re-entering angles, that although the king pricked his fingers with the spikes till they bled, he could not set it perpendicularly or horizontally on his head; he could not render the *tiara recta*. On the contrary, it stuck on the right side of his cerebellum, like a dragoon’s foraging cap, of which the glass beads, escaping from the magic crown that ought to have rounded his royal temples, formed the queue, that elegant

appendage which fashion has taken from the head of the tom-fool to put on that of the hero. But the king had no sooner impressed the crown on his mortal brows, than Hamel reminded him of the necessity of the unction, and again offered the phial to the Missionary, who shrunk from his rival, and the holy oil he tendered, as if it were a scorpion he was to handle. Still it was necessary to take it, and to go through the ceremony he had commenced, although the gracious monarch had already set the example to his subjects of crying out "God save the king!" and was engaged in saluting each of those around him with a royal kiss, while this little coquetry between the Obeah man and the Missionary continued. But the Obeah man would not resign the point: he was determined, though in the politest manner, to make his rival administer the oil, and kept urging it so pertinaciously, while the mob were hiccapping out "God save king Brutchie—king Combah!", that Roland was at last obliged to take it.

The drunken shouts echoed around the amphitheatre, while the increasing daylight had already warned some of his majesty's less intoxicated subjects to retire from his gracious presence, to handle the hoe or the bill for the less dignified, though not less arbitrary, cudjoes in the plains below—the drivers; whose whips

(the mortal badge of power and servitude) cracked till the very mountains repeated the sound. On some estates this signal has been commuted for the ringing of a bell, or the blast of a conch shell (sounds in every respect more agreeable,) and such was the stillness of the air and the serenity of the morning, that many of these were heard to mingle with the echoes of the whips, though at the distance of many miles, when the intoxicated bawlers, suspending their screams in order to take breath, allowed any echoes to be heard less hateful than those of their own bellowings. These various and to them unwelcome intimations insensibly thinned the ranks of the multitude, awakening; more effectually than the charms of the coronation could have done, even some of the heaviest sleepers, who resumed their legs to slink away through the passes among the rocks, or by one of the two main roads, each to his own master's domain. Some were however disposed to play the truant; and others remained as decided runaways, scorning to move from the scene, except as occasion or choice might direct them to the fastnesses in the interior. The sun was above the horizon, and his upward rays began to gild the summits of the rocks of this romantic amphitheatre: the vapours of the night, rising from the surrounding forest into a visible existence, now

flitted along the edges of the precipices, obscuring sometimes the giant trees which grew among and above their grey pinnacles—sometimes the pinnacles themselves, while their feathered plumes were still discernible above the mist—sometimes both pinnacles and trees at once ; and then again wreathing themselves into wild and fantastic forms, as they mounted into the upper air. These clouds reflected the sunbeams for a few moments, and melted away to leave a space, as it appeared, for others to succeed them in the same creation, progress, and decay.

The Missionary had taken the phial of coconut oil from the hands of his enemy ; and as the king objected to have his crown removed to receive his unction, Roland prepared to pour the contents of the bottle, over which he had muttered a sort of prayer, upon the sacred head it encircled. The oil was white, or colourless, as he received it ; but having drawn the cork, and held it for a moment at arm's length as high as he could reach, for the gratification of the bystanders, he with no little astonishment saw it assume a dye of the deepest crimson. This change was effected so rapidly, that Roland had not time to reason upon it, his agitation at the sight getting the better of his presence of mind ; and instead of emptying the bottle on the head of the sovereign, he threw it

with horror away from him, over the heads of the crowd, into the arena beyond.

Combah, surprized at the action, which he deemed an insult and a tergiversation, seized the Missionary by the throat; while Hamel exclaimed that it was not blood, and begged the Brutchie to forbear. But the monarch was too enraged to listen to him, and held the preacher in his gripe with a ferocious vigour, in spite of Hamel's intercession; while the mob, not knowing precisely what ought to have been done with the bottle, called to one another in amazement for some explanation, thinking that master Roland was going to be put to death, as a part of the ceremony. Hamel still talked of patience and forbearance, exclaiming—"Spare my friend, my friend, my brother Roland, the Christian Missionary." Roland, already half strangled by the black king whom he had been about to sanctify, was yet sensible to the insulting intercession of his rival. Life however is not to be surrendered in extremities of violence without a struggle: the Missionary grappled with the monarch, closed, tripped him up, and rolled with him on the sand. But the king had not loosed his grasp, though he was undermost; and notwithstanding Roland had in turn fastened his fingers on the neck of his antagonist, his own weazand was in very especial jeopardy.

Fate has prevented us from declaring what would have been the result, had things remained in this state a few moments longer : for a very unexpected circumstance intervened to put an end to the royal and religious fracas, and to this chapter at the same time.

CHAPTER XVI.

Run, run, Bonduca—not the quick race swifter,
The virgin from the hated ravisher
Not half so fearful : not a flight drawn home,
A round stone from a sling, a lover's wish,
E'er made that haste that they have.

BONDUCA.

A SHOUT from the top of the precipice to the eastward of the palm trees between them and the eastern sky, called off the attention of all those, his majesty's new subjects, who remained to witness his royal scuffle with the parson. The shout was repeated ; but the clouds, hanging before the towering crag from which the sound proceeded, enveloped the voice and the speaker in mystery. His words however were sufficiently articulate ; and when the Negroes heard the voice say distinctly “ Maroons ! ” a cry of consternation issued from every mouth below ; the drunken became sober, the sleepers awakened, the brave became cowards, and nine out of every ten ran

away as fast as their legs could carry them. Even Brutchie relaxed his hold; and Roland, gasping for breath, gave his royal antagonist half-a-dozen hearty English punches with his fist in the bread-basket and elsewhere, before he turned up his strained and starting eyeballs to inform himself of the person from whom the voice proceeded. At the same moment the clouds, clearing partially away, left only a sort of filmy mist, resplendent with the beams of the sun, between the rock and the spectators. It was more than half transparent; and while it betrayed the speaker whose clamorous voice had alarmed the fraternity, the illuminated vapour served to magnify his form into that of a giant of no common dimensions—to the eyes of Roland, as well as Combah, a demon of the first magnitude, with a sword hanging by his side, a monstrous musket in his left hand, and on his head the huge Spanish sombrero which had excited the amazement and apprehensions of Roland, even by the mention made of it. The figure, looking down into the arena, and waving his right arm as a signal, exclaimed again—"Begone—the Maroons are upon you—away!"

At this, every tenth man fled: the king, in as great distress as his subjects, forgetting his dignity and his crown (his crown and dignity) moved off with all possible celerity. Hamel

was already gone ; and Roland, fancying a black marshal at his heels in the shape of a Maroon, caught up his hat, ran after Cuffy, who was already on his march, mounted his Spanish nag, and galloped across the plain, and down the rocky road beside the waterfall, at the risk of every bone in his own and his horse's body.

Indeed, Cuffy would have been but little disappointed, had the horse and rider been brought up by a downfall of some kind ; for his master's apprehensions rendering speed to his own heels at least, he had kicked his beast into a pace by which the poor boy was distanced and unable to continue his hold upon the tail of the steed. He would have been left completely in the lurch, but for the day-light which enabled him to discriminate the road by its various angles, long after they had descended to the base of the rocks where he had dreamed away three parts of the night. This being all on the descent, Cuffy did not hesitate to quit the only practicable horse-road, and scrambled with facility from rock to rock, and from gully to gully, so that he was soon even with, and shortly after in advance of, his master ; with whom he then jogged on unceremoniously and expeditiously for at least half-a-dozen miles, until they reached the Devil's Gully, as it was called—the spot where the hurricane had stopped them in their march towards the

settlement from which they had just made so ignoble a retreat.

What a crowd of miserable ideas and recollections oppressed the mind of the forlorn voyager, as he passed this ominous, this fearful chasm! whence, as he now learned from him, his boy had been blown fairly away to leeward, even as far as the river where he had shaken hands with the black girls, from whom he afterwards found protection during the night. They were soon at the same spot again, and having passed about a mile, arrived at Belmont, where the boy was dispatched to the house to beg a breakfast for his master; while Roland, heated, feverish, and broken-down in mind and body, indulged himself with the refreshment of a bath in the river.—Let us here take leave of him for the present, and attend to the gentleman with the sombrero hat, whom we left on the summit of the rock.

No *coup-de-théâtre* was ever brought about with more facility or better effect, than the dispersion of the crowd by the hand-waving and the awful summons of Sebastiar. Enveloped as he was in the mist, it was but a passing glance which he had taken of the fracas below; the fog again gathering round him with so much celerity that he had not time to assure himself of the retreat of the rabble. Nor was it until

the clouds finally cleared away, that he could persuade himself he stood alone, the only figure in the landscape, the master in fact of the theatre of the late struggle. He descended from the rocks with his gun on his shoulder, and walked deliberately about the little plain, looking into the ruined mansion, and into its cellar, from which all evidences had been withdrawn that could have testified to the filthy rites practised there over night, except it were signs of the fire. The grass was trampled with the dancing; and there had been a shuffling upon the barbicue as well as in many other places, where the sand was rumpled with the feats and the frolics of this band of worthies. A few broken pipes, and a stray calabash or two, were all the insignia of their drunken festivities.

But although the coast was clear, and Sebastian might have fancied he had the field to himself, yet (as the reader must suppose) he could not be altogether uninformed of the purpose for which the meeting had been held; at least he could not but guess that it was held for some illegal purpose, however the ingenuity of the Negro race in lying, and their perseverance in standing out in a lie, might have led him to believe, if it had come to the question, that it was all an innocent frolic, a merry-making; and that the scuffle which he had in part witnessed, between

the king and his vicar, was all in the way of such frolics. As a brown man, he would have been told that the parson got drunk and quarrelled with Combah, whom they commonly called Brutchie. But the Mulatto, for want of such an assurance, believed, as he could not avoid doing, that all was not right ; more especially as he had put their assembly to flight by the bare mention of the Maroons. Moreover, he had heard, during his cruise in the canoe, that a revolt was intended as the sequel to the attack on Mr Guthrie's house, although the mode of effecting it was a mystery to his companions, as well as himself. He knew also that such attempts at rebellion are generally reserved for Christmas-time, when the holidays allow of the Negroes extending their communications over the island with more facility and certainty than at other seasons. He had not ventured into the crowd, to hear the harangue of Roland—that is, to distinguish the purport of his speech ; and the brawling of the cataracts had prevented his discovering what was said from a distance : but he divined too well the arguments of the preacher, and had waited till daylight to assure himself, not only of the presence of that gentleman, but of his taking at least some interest in the events of the night, whatever they might be. He had beheld him indeed sufficiently interested in the matter ; and it appeared almost

probable that but for his interference Roland would have hardly escaped strangulation.

Sebastian walked around the arena of this natural amphitheatre, with his gun apparently ready in case of a surprise, searching into the chinks of the rocks, and looking under the trees and bushes, lest any one should have concealed himself there, to take advantage of his being alone, and revenge the crowd for having been alarmed by a name. But all was solitude: he heard only the roaring of water, and the screaming of crickets, with the occasional gabbling of the parrots as they flew across the plain. There were doubtless some of the Negro crew eying the Mulattô from their eyries; but they were all invisible to him, ensconced among the rocks on high, perched perhaps on trees, or laid flat on the summits of the crags which overhung the plain: there was nothing human visible but himself. He sat down by the ruins of the house under the shade of a shaddock tree; and, laying his gun by his side, began to ruminate on his peculiar, and as he thought unhappy, situation; but before he could give vent to any of the griefs which preyed on his mind, his reverie was startled by the report of a gun, and a black man rushed suddenly into the arena, as if in pursuit of some game at which he had fired. "This," thought he, "must be a hog-hunter, a Maroon, a pigeon-

shooter, or—No : it is my man, my individual Hamel !” He rose from his position ; and the Obeah man, with an activity and celerity beyond his years, ran joyfully, as it seemed, towards him, and welcomed him to the island.

Sebastian raised himself to his full height, and said to him in a serious and rather mysterious tone of voice—“ Fairfax will be here tomorrow, if he does not land to-day. He has not forgotten Hamel, nor his services ; but what have you been doing here ? There is treason and rebellion on foot. Hamel ! keep yourself free from suspicion ; remember what a white man has done for you ; do not *you* disgrace the generosity of your benefactor. Here has been a plot to carry off a young lady by rascals and runaways—a crew of villains who designed to rob old Guthrie’s house. I owed to them my safety, perhaps my life, at any rate my liberty and the means of returning to my native land ; else I had delivered them up to the magistrates, the instant they set foot in Jamaica. You must know of this plot, Hamel. A man named Combah was their employer ; and they told me that a parson was to make him king. Surely this parson is not Roland.”

The Obeah man hesitated.

“ I know that Roland was here : I saw him, or my eyes deceived me ; though it is long since they beheld him before.”

“ Well, master,” said the wizard ; “ Roland *was* here, and quarrelled with the Negroes, as you saw ; but we are not safe here : there are eyes on us that we can neither see nor evade : a gang of runaways who frequent this ruined abode, who belonged to it, are probably even now within shot of you : not that I apprehend anything for your safety ; but come—let us decamp.”

“ Hark ye, Hamel !” said the other, as they walked across the plain to the river’s brink ; “ I warn you again to be prudent. I have sent a slave to tell the governor of this Combah and the gang of rascals who brought me from Cuba. I gave them notice ; I beat it into their sheep’s heads ; I bid them return to their masters, or take themselves off the island. I cautioned or caused to be cautioned Mr Guthrie ; I will alarm the country ; I came to your house—to your little cave among the rocks.”

“ Who told you where to find me ?”

“ Ask me not, Hamel : there were too many knew that there was mischief plotting. I learnt at the ford above Golden Vale estate, that a man, who by the description must have been this Roland, had passed to windward, intending a journey to this very spot ; I saw the fires the previous night ; I am satisfied there is a plot on foot ; and I command—I entreat you to tell me all. You may save the island—you may save yourself.

I count upon your fidelity ; I will not believe you capable of deceiving or betraying the son of your benefactor, him to whom you vowed you would repay the services his family had conferred upon you."

" I remember the oath—I remember the occasion," replied the Obeah man. " I never can forget the services, the favours, I have received ; I was redeemed from the fangs of a tyrant, from the basest slavery, from the dominion of one who was a slave in my own country, when I was the possessor of flocks and herds—aye, and of slaves too. But you must give me time, master, to think what I must do. Fear not for yourself: not a hair of your head shall be hurt."

" I fear for you more than for myself," replied the brown man. " I have taken precautions to alarm the magistracy ; and if need be, I will alarm the island ;—but that were better avoided : our friends in England despair of us already ; and if they hear of an insurrection, what shall we expect ? What shall they do who are in debt to their merchants ? And all are in debt : foreclosures here and there, judgments, levyings, vendues,—we shall have a revolution of property first, and then be hunted into the sea, or murdered by the Negroes : the island will be worthless to the Whites, worthless to the Blacks. If freedom be any object to you——"

“No, no,” rejoined the wizard with a sigh. “Freedom! I am free enough, except the white men quit the island. I never thought to see you back again; yet I wish now I had been made free. But give me time: there shall be no harm. You have done well: your plan, your discovery, has been your own. Hamel is innocent of all that may happen to either party, black or white. Why do your friends in England send Missionaries to preach here? Are the merchants and mortgagees there the slaves of the Methodists? And why does king George want to make the slaves free for nothing, after the white men have paid for them? You know, master, there must be something wicked here, if the king says we should be free; but what will be our freedom? What are we to do—the ignorant, nasty, drunken Negroes, who were born slaves in Congo, and Coromantin, and Houssa, and Mundingu. Some will make the others work: there will be slaves for ever, unless the white men stay with soldiers and cannons to keep the strong ones from beating the weak ones, and making the women do all the work. Some of the slaves who won’t work must die: and what is to become of those, the black men and the brown men, who have now got a few slaves to work for them,—some one, some two or three? Ah! your great men in England must be very silly or very wicked, or all must be wrong

here: for they will make Jamaica ten times worse than my own country was ever made by war, and fighting, and robbery, and murder."

While this dialogue was taking place, Sebastian and Hamel had turned their backs on the scene of the nocturnal orgies, festivities, and broils; and were walking slowly down the rocky dingle which formed the channel of the rivulet, and the narrow road beside it, covered with the umbrageous canopy of trees, whose interwoven boughs were still closer bound together by the numerous parasitical plants of the wilderness.

"Here are the tracks of Roland's horse," said the Obeah man. "He has gone with expedition home. You should have heard his speech:—no wonder he was in a hurry to escape."

"The noise of the waterfall prevented me," replied Sebastian. "I knew him always subtle and intriguing."

"You know him not," said Hamel; "or at least you know but half of him. It shall be my business to make you fully acquainted with him: but that must not be yet. I never thought to have seen you back again—no, never; but when I heard how you had beaten the sailors, and flung them in the sea, I knew it must be yourself—I knew of none other who had the strength or the dexterity to do so."

"They saved me, and were entitled at least to

some consideration. But tell me, Hamel—though I denounce *them* not, what must I say of yourself? There are stories abroad of you that will endanger your existence here. The man I sent to Spanish Town declared that you have the reputation of being a practitioner of Obeah; and that, although you do your duty as a watchman and a hog-hunter, you have some secret hiding-place, some cave, which I know not, among the rocks, where runaways come to hear their fortunes and to buy charms of you for the purpose of tormenting and destroying one another:—nay, when I entered your cave—the one that I remember—I saw a person there who came for you, to lay your hands, as he said, upon his eyes; for he was blind. It was he told me what was to be done here, about making a preaching.”

“I have some secrets, sir,” replied the Obeah man, “by which Sebastian himself has not disdained to profit; but I have not used them hitherto to the prejudice of any man—that is, my secrets. For the rest I have no fear. I know how cheaply a Negro’s life is valued here, if he is even suspected of what you allude to; and my life is of little value to myself even. If I cannot employ it to your advantage, the sooner I lay it down, the better; but I *have* the power to serve you, and that most effectually.”

“Not by any illicit means, Hamel. What

would be said of me, if I were to employ an Obeah man? Deny it—tell me the tale is groundless. Where is this cave? and who was the blind man?”

“ I have no cave but that you know of,” replied the wizard. “ You have not seen the extent of it, and must not.”

“ Must not, Hamel !”

“ You must not, you cannot :—you would be lost among the windings ; and there is a spell upon it, and upon him that shall enter it to explore its secrets,”

“ Nonsense !” replied Sebastian. “ We have no faith in spells. But how happens it, that I, who have so often sat in the cave in my youth, spent whole days in it, clambered among its rocks and upon the trees around its mouth, should yet have been ignorant that it extended beyond the little chamber which alone it seems to contain? Have I not stood on every pinnacle above it and about it, to wait for a shot at the pigeons? And what is the spell you talk of?”

“ Your father,” said the Obeah man, “ believed in the spell: he told it me; he said the words were Spanish, and had belonged to the cave ever since the conquest of the island.”

“ But what did they portend—these words?”

“ Ah !” cried Hamel, “ you will find them on your father’s papers : I hardly understood them

then, and I forget them now ; but I know it was bad luck to him that came to search—that he should find blood who came to look for it, and shed blood before he could get out again.”

“ Well,” rejoined the other, “ I should not have looked for blood. I can remember once in years past Joanna and myself, in my father’s life, have ing mounted to the top of one of those pinnacles about your rocks, looked down into a little lake environed with impassable crags. We would have descended, but could not ; or we thought it impossible to re-ascend. There was a large yellow snake coiled up on its brink : we pelted it with pieces of the rock ; and before we struck it, it only hissed at us for our pains : but at last Joanna threw a stone which hit some part of it, and rebounded into the lake ; and then——”

“ It followed you ?” said the Obeah man.

“ It darted into the water, as if it were enraged by the blow, and then sprang again to the shore, and glided rapidly into a small cavity at the base of the rock ; and while we stood and gazed in expectation of seeing it return to the lake, we heard it, or it might have been another, hissing among the bushes beneath us at the foot of the pinnacle on which we stood. Joanna was alarmed ; and we fled in haste from the spot. We have never been there since together ; and though I

searched alone for the place many a time, I could not find it again."

"I have found it," said Hamel: "I have seen the snake."

"*The snake!*" repeated the other. "Is there then but one, and always one? Years have passed away since the time at which I looked upon the lake and the serpent beside it."

"I have known it for years," rejoined the wizard; "and there has been a snake there always. In my country they would say it guarded something—a treasure—a mine of gold perhaps, or of precious stones."

Sebastian smiled. "In other countries," said he, "it would be accused of guarding something more valuable—a pretty maiden, for instance."

"Even that may be," replied the wizard. "Master, I am glad to see you; I wish you had come sooner; but—I must repeat it—I never thought to behold you again among these mountains, nor in this island. Whither will you go?"

"I go to Belmont as the attendant of Fairfax. I have a part to act, and want your help and testimony; but you must first tell me about this meeting, and who were at it, and what is intended to be done by this Combah. I must have him secured: the insurrection must be suppressed before I can attempt anything for myself. I should

have gone at once to the governor; but I must have betrayed my own purpose; and that betrayal would have defeated me perhaps for ever. You will have martial law: many will be apprehended, and some one will impeach you, Hamel, if you have done aught amiss. Do you think these creatures, who ran away at the mention of the Maroons, will hesitate to sacrifice you, if by so doing they can themselves escape from the penalty of rebellion or conspiracy?"

"I have done nothing that they know of," replied the Obeah man. "They will lie no doubt, if they are taken, and tell of one another to get clear themselves. But you shall know all to-morrow; give me a night to think of it; and be assured there shall be no more meetings. I have influence with all who can do harm—influence enough to make them give up their dearest hopes: these they shall resign. I must have an eye on master Roland too.—But here, sir, we are arrived at my mountain grounds, and my cave—the cave with which you are acquainted; and yonder sits a figure by the side of the lagoon before it."

"The blind man," said the other; "is it not? Yet he sees us, and sees his way into the cave too without stepping into the water. Your presence, Hamel, has already cured him of his affliction."

"I shall know him before long," replied the Obeah man; "who and what he is. Your gun

is loaded, master; but stay! use it not—is it some treachery?—I have heard often that such a figure has been seen by the lagoon; and many Negroes have reported there is a duppie haunts the rocks and even the cave itself; yet strange to say, (if such a spirit does frequent the spot) I never met with him before. I that have made the cave my own, as I may say, have looked in vain for the goblin which others cannot fail to espy in my absence. They say it is myself—my own duppie. Let us take a circuit, sir, to the other side of the lagoon, and look into the cave from a distance; I have a glass; there are no means of concealment where the figure entered, and you can keep your musket ready in case of any attempt at violence.”

“Nay, Hamel,” said Sebastian, taking the Obeah man’s gun, “give me your arms rather. Mine is a Spanish piece. I took it from the robbers in the canoe, and it was wet.”

“Trust not to mine,” rejoined the other; “it is uncertain. Stay, draw your charge—I have fresh ammunition: here is a horn half filled with powder, and I have bullets or small shot, which you please. Let us ensure every chance in our favour: we know not whom we have to encounter.”

The Spanish piece was unloaded, and Hamel drew from under his frock the cow’s horn tipped with brass, which had been used in the cellar; un-

dertaking to recharge the gun, while Sebastian, with the other musket and the spyglass, stole softly among the bushes to the farther side of the lake; and lying down on the grass, began to reconnoitre the mouth of the cave, not a little surprised that Hamel should profess his ignorance respecting this mysterious personage, who had the reputation of haunting the spot where the Obeah man was accustomed to pass so many of his hours.

“A most strange and unaccountable creature is this Hamel,” thought he; “yet I believe he would not harm me:—but what is this? Neither a blind man nor a duppie, nor a black man, nor—what in the name of fortune is it that I see?” The mouth of the cave opened full upon the little lagoon before it, which reflected its vaulty cove, and the mass of foilage and flowers that hung from the rock above it and screened its interior from the glare of the sun. There were two benches within it, one of which was altogether vacant, but on the other a figure seemed to repose, a youthful figure, neither Negro nor Mulatto, but a white boy.

“Who can this be?” said he to Hamel, who had crept close to him. “Take the glass and examine. This is not your duppie, whatever the other may have been: this is a buckra young gentleman.”

“It is a buckra girl, sir, or I am much mistaken.”

“A girl, Hamel!” said the other; “and for what purpose does she come here?”

“That you may ask her, if she is a girl; but she has the garments of a man—of a boy at least—has she not?”

“And what has become of the blind Negro? Can you discover him?” said Sebastian. “Or has he converted his clumsy and decrepid figure into that which looks so amiable?”

“The figure sleeps sound,” replied the conjuror. “I can see how deep she breathes; for it is certainly a woman: the outline of her bosom too is evident, if I mistake not. But ‘where the man has vanished, you see my skill cannot yet discover. I shall begin to think it is a duppie.’”

“Or your genius, Hamel,” said the other,—“good or bad; who takes his turn in your absence; for it seems it is invisible while you are here. There is something unaccountable in it; but it must be unsubstantial, or whither is it gone? Put up the glass, and let us walk towards the cave. We can go silently and softly enough to avoid disturbing the sleeping figure, if it sleeps in reality; or to discover if the sleep be feigned, or if it be a mere change of character. There can be no deception in that figure, I should think,

which can forebode us any harm: youth is sincere, at least."

"I have no fear, master," said the Obeah man. "Take you one side of the lagoon, and I will pass by the other; so that escape from one of us shall be impossible. The figure moves not."

There was a pass by which the duppie, or blind Negro, or whatever he might be, could have retired from their sight; and this was by a sort of steps hollowed in the rock behind the foliage that hung from the crags above, to which the steps led. But Hamel dared not trust his friend, for such he seemed to consider him, with even this secret of his dwelling in the wilderness. Having been once stolen from his own country; having experienced all the bitterness, all the extremes of misery, which slavery inflicts on a free mind, he was too wary, too suspicious, to trifle for a moment with his own security, as far as his abode at least could ensure it to him. We have seen how he was provisioned; we shall hereafter see how he was fortified. After all, he probably had some inkling of the figure which had disappeared, however he chose by his observations to encrease the mystery of that disappearance in the imagination of Sebastian.

They measured their steps so accurately, the Obeah man and the Mulatto, that they arrived at the mouth of the cave together, without having

made noise sufficient to have alarmed the most vigilant dragon that ever figured in romance, had he been here guarding golden fleece, or golden apples, or maiden with golden locks. The figure they beheld in the cave had no gold about it; and as there was no dragon to alarm, we may proceed at once to give some account of the sleeper.

CHAPTER XVII.

You do impeach your modesty too much
To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not ;
To trust the opportunity of night,
And the ill counsel of a desert place,
With the rich worth of your virginity.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE figure which lay before the admiring eyes of the Obeah man and his brown-faced companion was really in a deep sleep. Her skin (for it certainly was a woman) was nearly as white as that of any European, of a clear and animated hue, the roses glowing upon her cheeks—a blush no doubt occasioned by her sleep ; and her forehead was shaded by some of the prettiest brown curls that ever graced the brows of a Quadroon damsel. Her eyes were closed of course ; but the long black eyelashes which like portcullises guarded those portals of her heart, or mind, or genius, or whatever it may hereafter appear to be, that the portals betrayed when they were open,

—had been designed by nature with such attention to symmetry, and to what we have learned from our ancestors to consider beautiful, that even Hamel, with all his mountain of arcana on his mind, could not look on them altogether unmoved, or insensible to the charms which the younger of the spectators contemplated with a more fervid, a more passionate feeling. Her eyebrows were also black as ebony, thin, and arched with a precision that art can seldom imitate, at least on living subjects. Her lips were twice as rosy as her cheeks, like two pieces of polished coral; and the *ensemble* of her face was certainly as engaging as anything that had ever fixed the attention of the Obeah man on this side of the great Atlantic. The damsel was dressed in male attire; videlicet, a blue jacket of woollen cloth, with a waistcoat and trowsers of white jean, which with her shirt were white as snow; a pink handkerchief, tied loosely round the collar of the latter, was tucked through a button hole into her bosom. Her head was bare; but a straw hat which she had worn lay on the ground beside her, appearing to have fallen off in her sleep. Her feet were also naked, as if she had shaken off a pair of shoes with which they had been encumbered; but they were as round, as neat, and as exquisitely modelled, as any that Sebastian had ever yet beheld. So also were her hands, in one of

the fingers of which she wore a ring by which that brown gentleman would have recognised her, if he had not already divined from her physiognomy that she was Michal, the pretty soubrette from the mansion of his late host Mr Guthrie. This discovery he kept however to himself; and when the Obeah man said with a sigh, “What a pretty creature!”—(it was said in a whisper)—Sebastian replied only by another, a longer, deeper-drawn, and rather impassioned sigh, and a slight inclination of his head, as if to express his perfect accordance with the remark of the conjuror. He was not so old as Hamel by at least thirty years.

“What can be her business here?” thought the younger of the spectators. “And what a poor disguise! Or rather, why has she assumed this masculine attire, for it is no disguise?”

“There is love at the bottom of all this,” said the Obeah man in a whisper. “These Mulattos and Mestees think of nothing else, from the hour in which they are weaned from their mothers’ breast until time has wasted away every trace of their beauty; and then they console themselves with the recollection of all the transports they have enjoyed.”

“From the mother’s breast?”

“Yes, master, yes: their mothers breathe it into their very souls with every kiss which they

impart to them, and fill their heads with the anticipation of the charms they will possess, and the conquests they will make, and the riches they will acquire, by their connexion with some great buckra planter. Yet avarice is not their ruling passion, even in old age. My life upon it, this young girl is in love with some white gentleman—for they always aspire : ambition goes at least hand in hand with love—ambition of distinction, of being above the pity at least of all their friends and rivals, if not of being an object of their envy. How sound she sleeps, poor child!—Shall I leave her to your care?”

Sebastian could not help smiling at this courtesy of his companion ; for as such he considered it. “I do not know,” he replied, “which of us should take charge of her, or whether either of us should meddle with her.”

“Let me go,” rejoined the Obeah man : “I will prepare you some food. Yonder is my house ; you must be hungry and exhausted ; I will make you a fire here before the cave, and get you some cocoes, and send down if you please to the great house for a bottle of wine.”

“Not for the world—not for the world,” said the other. “Bring me some of your own mess—your pepper-pot, so there be no rats in it, nor dog nor cat flesh ; some cocoes or plantains, and

some fruit. But what am I to think of the blind Negro? Is this duddie of yours to be a spy upon me?"

. "You have a better one in your thoughts and recollections, sir," said the wizard. "I do not think you have anything to fear. If you should see this man, you may force him to tell you who and what he is. Ghosts cannot harm you."

"Well, begone; and let us see the result."

The Obeah man took him at his word, and descended towards a Negro house at the distance of about half a mile. The brown man then stepped gently into the cave, and sat down on the vacant bench, taking care to make no noise that could disturb the sleeping beauty who occupied the other. He kept his eyes for some time on Hamel, until he saw him dive as it were into a plantain-walk, a part of the estate to which these rocks and caves belonged; when he turned his attention again to the pretty girl, whose features he reperused with no less admiration than he had conceived before, and with rather more scrutiny than he had felt at sufficient ease to employ in the presence of the wizard. "What a sweet face!" said he to himself. "Can the Eastern Houris surpass its loveliness—or even the beauties of Great Britain? And what a form! Praxiteles himself could not have desired a more enchanting model. How beautiful is the blush upon her

cheek ! It is almost as deep as the rose-colour of her silk handkerchief. And her skin—how smooth and delicate, and how fair !—Who would suppose her to be the descendant of an African black—of one whose skin was as sooty as that of Hamel ? And where are the thick lips, and the flat nose, and the woolly hair ? Not even Joanna herself could surpass her in any of the externals of beauty. Whither does she wander alone, unguarded, unattended ? What has she done, and what does she design ?”—These ideas were succeeded by many others for which the reader will easily give credit to the Mulatto, if he will fancy himself in a similar situation. Youth, beauty, and clean linen,—according to Archer’s Catechism,—are the incentives to love ; and the beauties of the tropics are not more inexorable than those of the temperate zone. Here were the lips (like Romeo’s two blushing pilgrims) which he had already had the impudence to salute, and for so doing had been already reproved. He was tempted however to repeat the offence ; for, as he drew near, and leaned over the back of the bench on which the sleeper lay, to take a more perfect view of her, there was something so attractive in her person and condition, “ so redolent of youth” and love, something so sweet and fragrant in the breath which he inhaled as he hung over her, something so fascinating in the smile which

seemed to play about her mouth,—that he forgot, absolutely forgot, the colour of his skin, and the aversion which it would excite in the eyes of the beauty, if he should rouse her, and she should detect him presuming upon her defenceless situation. He hesitated some time before he could muster sufficient hardihood ; but at last the charms of the pretty creature persuaded him that he was in some sort excusable, when, kneeling by her side, he imprinted a kiss on her rosy lips. She awoke not with the first, nor yet with the second ; but the third—(we may suppose that the adventurer had become bolder)—disturbed her repose. She opened her black eyes very gently ; and seeing the brown man on his knee by her side, sprang rapidly on her feet, exclaiming—“ Oh heaven ! Sebastian, is it you ?—I was dreaming of you.”

“ Of me ?” replied the Mulatto, somewhat ashamed of himself. “ Why of me ?”

His looks expressed some contrition for the liberty he had taken, which the girl heeded not, merely remarking that she had watched the stars all night, and had been overwhelmed at length with sleep. “ But where have you been ?” she continued. “ Not, I hope, with those wretches in the canoe : they are villains and robbers.”

“ ’Twas I that told you so, my pretty maid. Did I not warn you, and bid you warn old Guthrie,

of their intentions? Did I not send Drybones Nimrod to you again? You are still dreaming."

"Yes, yes," replied she, recollecting herself; "I remember—forgive me, Sebastian. That Nimrod told me I might find you here; or at least that I should find a man, a black man, who would or could tell me much about you."

"About me, Michal?" rejoined Sebastian. "What has made you curious about me? Did your mistress bid you make inquiries?"

"My mistress," said the Quadroon, rather interrupting him, "is somewhat anxious respecting you, and is not displeased that I expressed a desire to learn some farther news of you. I had her permission to go to Belmont."

"But why in this disguise?"

"Ah, sir," replied the Quadroon, "do not you be too curious. As I have already told you, I watched the stars last night in this cave: my business was to find you, or to find the man who dwells here. I came alone, unprotected; yet my disguise was of no avail, at least with you: it might have served me with others."

"Well, Michal," said the Mulatto in return; "whom saw you here?"

"I have seen no one distinctly; I sat here all night, and thought once or twice that I heard footsteps; and fancied too that I could see a figure walking beside the lagoon; but I was mistaken;

for when I went out to look, I could discover no one."

"Still," interrupted Sebastian, "you have at length found him you sought. Here am I, the unworthy person for whom it seems you have undertaken this pilgrimage: what are your wishes now? Is it some message, or some token, from your mistress—a letter?"

"No, indeed," replied the soubrette, with a smile which relieved the little confusion under which she appeared to labour; "my mistress had no message for the captain of the canoe: it was not her fancy that led me to seek you."

"Whose fancy was it then?" rejoined Sebastian. "There can be no guile, no treachery, in that bosom: my enemy could not employ such an instrument to injure me; he could not, I am sure, prevail on such an emissary to attempt even to deceive me."

"Your enemies," said the Quadroon, "if you have any, must be the companions of your canoe; for they are bad men. Alas! I know not how to tell you—I have hardly told to myself—why I have sought you; but I believe it was because I feared some mischief might happen to you. There was a mystery in what you said to me before you joined your comrades; and you seemed unhappy and cast down. I was standing on the rocks by the sea side, straining my eyes in search of your

canoe, when I was accosted by him you call Nimrod, whom I knew again. He begged me to take your message to my master, to whom I told that your canoe was again broken, and its crew gone a shore ; and that Nimrod was to set off for Spanish Town, to put the governor on his guard, for the slaves were going to rise. To own the truth, I feared they had killed you, and thrown you into the sea."

" And it was to satisfy yourself on this point that you came to the watchman's cave for news of me? Nimrod was right ;—but your mistress had surely some concern in your enterprise?"

" Not the least, I assure you," replied Michal. " I was perhaps impertinent and foolish to come here ; but I had—you will despise me for owning it—a wish to serve you."

" How, Michal?"

The eyes of the Quadroon were cast down ; but the Mulatto had taken her hand, as if to encourage her. " I have deserved nothing of you," said he : " what service could you render me ? I own with pleasure the gratification which my vanity derives from such a confession on the part of a pretty girl ; but I am at a loss to imagine from your own account in what way I could be benefited by your concern."

" I am vain, and bold, and foolish," said the soubrette, with a look of apprehension. " I sup-

pose it was my fate to come hither : I thought I might save you from the company of bad men—rebels, pirates ; that I might prevail on you to renounce this terrible life, and caution you even against being too intimate with the man who dwells in yonder hut and in this cave ; for he is suspected of being an Obeah man, and when Mr Fairfax comes home, he will be taken up and perhaps transported.”

“ I am but too much indebted to you,” replied the Mulatto, considerably flattered with the benevolent expressions of the soubrette : “ I know not how to thank you.”

“ I shall be sufficiently thanked,” said Michal, “ if you will assure me that you are not a pirate nor a buccaneer. But own to me fairly who and what you are. For my own part, I feel assured that you are a good and honest man, and not a robber.”

“ What if I *were*, Michal ?” rejoined the Mulatto. “ Suppose I were really in league with him whom you call an Obeah man ; that I were the captain of the crew I brought to your master’s house ; that I came here to aid rebellion ; but finding myself suspected and likely to be betrayed, that I should summon my companions to my assistance, and make at least a prize of you ? The buccaneers were as fond of women as of cash ; nay, they loved money only as the means

of pleasure ; and were I to search the island—the Carribbean sea, Michal—where should I find a more glorious prize than the pretty girl that stands beside me ?”

The Quadroon smiled. “ If it were so,” she replied, “ I should be deeply and sincerely grieved ; but you are jesting, and I feel convinced you are an honest man.”

The Mulatto saw but too clearly that the pretty damsel had taken a fancy to his dingy face ; and had he been at all the character which he had just represented, he would no doubt have taken advantage of the disposition she had betrayed towards him. Sebastian was but a young man—the Quadroon was young and beautiful ; and it requires perhaps considerable fortitude to steer clear of such temptations as these, which Fortune, or the Enemy of Mankind, lays in the way of men of honour, to lead them into mischief. He could not but reflect on the danger of the charming girl, unsuspecting, confiding, generous, and open-hearted ; yet he could not approve of her derogating from the pride of her sex in descending, although in his own favour, to one beneath her in the scale of colour ; nor could he entertain or endure the thought of her exposing herself to a similar peril in any future case. This feeling has effected the ruin of many a pretty creature, and the disgrace of many a worthy man, at the

very moment in which they both perhaps entertained some of the noblest sentiments of which the human mind is capable. As there is allowed to be but one step from the throne to the scaffold, so there is in matters of the heart but one step from heroism to the meanest capitulation.

“ Michal,” said Sebastian, “ you deserve the love of any man, be his colour what it may ; but you should look upwards, as the rest of your sex do.”

“ To what ?” replied the damsel : “ to what ? To the love of some white gentleman who will be pleased with me and proud of me, till he goes home to England to spend his fortune ; and then I shall hear no more of him ! If I should ever love such a person, I should be most unhappy.”

“ And you would rather love some one of your own caste, with whom you could hope to spend the whole of your life ? Some one fairer than me, provided he would be sincere, faithful, and affectionate.”

“ You mock me, Sebastian,” answered the soubrette ; “ but if you will not tell me who you are, I shall console myself that I have seen you in safety. Perhaps you will come back again to Mr Guthrie’s, if you were sincere in your advice about guarding us against the Negroes.”

“ I dare not, Michal ; but you may stay with me to-day. Are you a slave ?”

“I am, sir,” replied the girl; “but for my freedom—my master has provided for that in his will; and my mistress, my young mistress, would make me free to-morrow, if I were to ask her.”

“Why do you not?”

“I have no want of freedom: what should I do with myself? A time may come when such a change may make me happier; but now it would be useless to me.”

“Stay with me yet to-day, my pretty mistress. There is something in your voice and speech, and your manner, and your kind looks, that charms my heart, and cheats me out of the recollections that oppress me. Yonder comes Hamel with provisions: I have been *your* guest—you shall now be mine: the old man shall wait upon us—or we will wait on one another—or I will wait on you, Michal. Be seated: it is a happiness to be with you, near you—to look on you; and it would be a happiness to love you.”

The Quadroon girl looked wistfully in his face, as she seated herself again on the bench; and as the youth returned her placid and affectionate smile, he construed the expression of her features to mean, as a corollary to his last words—“it would be also a happiness to myself.” “I must not love you,” thought he; “I must not adore you; but I must and will like you—aye, and love you too, if I cannot help it:—but I will not

wrong you, nor deceive you, nor take any advantage of you—no, by my hopes of happiness!” He went from the cave, to meet the Obeah man on the bank of the lagoon ; but not before he had tenderly pressed the fair hand of the black-eyed damsel in his own—in both his own—and then—(God of Negro love !)—with his lips.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Look thou be true ; do not give dalliance
Too much the rein ; the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire in the blood : be more abstemious ;
Or else, good night your vow. TEMPEST.

THE Obeah man arrived on the instant with his provisions in a basket ; and having set them down in the cave, began to collect a few sticks for a fire. There was a smile upon his features, by which Michal suspected that he had been a witness to the gallantry of Sebastian. He made her however a profound bow, and congratulated her, with the politeness of a courtier, on the happy sleep she had enjoyed. The fire was soon kindled by some hocus-pocus of mine host, and the plantains and cocoes put beside it to roast ; while Sebastian drew from the basket two or three pine apples, and a wooden bottle of fermented sugar-cane juice ; and the Quadroon, not to be idle, went with a calabash to fetch some water from a little fountain which gushed from the rock at the dis-

tance of a few yards, and trickled into the lagoon. While she was gone, the Obeah man found an opportunity to tell Sebastian that there had been an alarm at the great house respecting the expected appearance of Mr Fairfax, who was to come to take possession of his estate, and drive out the trustee attorney, with the help of a brown man and the crew of a privateer ship which had been wrecked in the storm. "This story," added he, "must come from Mr Guthrie's Negroes."

"Aye, aye, Hamel, a story loses little in the telling," said Sebastian; "but no matter."

The Quadroon observed them whispering, and with some mortification; for she liked not the looks any more than the character she had heard of the Obeah man; and she would have been as well content, if on this account alone, to have dispensed with his company, although she would thus have been condemned to a *tête-à-tête*, and in the wilderness, with the mysterious personage whose manners, and language, and figure, and brown face, had so bewitched, or it may be bewildered, her reason.

Hamel had been liberal in producing his provisions, and prepared with much expedition a substantial mess after the Negro fashion, consisting of all sorts of good things—(cats, rats, dogs, and lizards excepted)—mixed up with ochros and peppers. He did not however pre-

sume to eat with the youth and his fair companion, but waited on them as occasion required or when he was wanted, at other times retiring out of their sight from the cave, though not out of hearing ; and when they had satisfied their appetites, he cleared all away, and retired for the present, as he said, to take a little sleep, of which he stood so much in need.

Michal and the brown man were thus left alone a second time, seated as before, side by side, on one of the rude benches, from whence they could see through the entrance of the little cave over the distant woods and plains below—the first silent, and untenanted except by wild animals, the latter enlivened with the industry of busy Negroes, whose songs, as they toiled, were sometimes wafted upon the wind, in an indistinct murmur, to their attentive ears. Not that their ears or their attention were directed to catch these particular sounds : a mutual feeling occupied them occasionally—an idea of being overheard themselves, if not overlooked ; and they listened from time to time to catch any sounds that might chance to be distinguishable or audible. The youth listened for the duppie ; the damsel listened oftener to the beating of her own heart, and ran over in her mind, as she listened, all the possible chances of spending her life—the hey-day of it, her halcyon years—in the company

and society of this (as she thought him) enterprising Mulatto. Old age she thought not of; or if the idea obtruded itself among the bright prospects which her fancy conjured up, it was exiled into the background, the remotest distance, where, like deformed mountains in the horizon of a picture, it was so disguised by the aerial hue with which her fancy clothed it, that it looked still lovely, as flattering as any other portion of the scene. She had easily persuaded herself that Sebastian at least liked her—loved her. How kindly he had spoken to her—how affectionately! She thought too of his kisses; and though he had presumed even on the second occasion, that is, when he awakened her in the cave, still he had treated her with respect and tenderness, and last of all he had kissed even her hand. Who knows not that even yet many of the marriages, if they may be called marriages, of people of colour in Jamaica and the other islands are attended, like those of the patriarchs of old, with little or no ceremony?—There is no intervention, in those cases, of priest or lawyer; no vows, oaths, protestations, of love and obedience; no mention of mysteries, and no invocation of any god or gods. My countrymen will treat with scorn the idea of such being marriages, as the parties do not swear upon the Bible, or at the altar, to keep to one another for life—an oath too often broken

among themselves; but they have long sufficed for the society to which they were adapted by nature, and in many, if not in most, cases are considered as binding, and are as *religiously* abided by, as the union of the most devout and virtuous people of Europe.

“ Love, light as air, at sight of human ties
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.”

Here are no ties but those of love, mutual regard, and a conscientious feeling of the propriety, if not of the necessity, of treating each other after the Christian recommendation—as each would in turn wish to be treated. The consequence of this facility, as it would be called in England, is that young women are no sooner marriageable than they are married—at that season of life too, when heart and soul are the only gifts desired or offered, and nature is sole mistress; though, as it is usual with her elsewhere, she practises a little coquetry to enhance the value of those gifts, and to increase the sum of happiness at which her votaries arrive. Perhaps an old maid was never heard of in this class of society, any more than among the Turks and Persians.

“ Here love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings—
Reigns here, and revels.”

This state of things being premised for the advantage of the reader, who will excuse the

digression, we must return to the pretty Quadroon, whom we left counting the beats of her own heart, with her mind running upon love, anxious yet fearful to hear some declaration from her companion that would enable herself, though by a look only, by a sigh, by silence even, to assure Sebastian that such avowal was most agreeable to her—that she heard it with pleasure, with gratitude. It never occurred to her till this moment, that he might have a wife already; although, from the kind of liberty he had presumed to take with her, she could not but expect that now, when they were alone together—(and she was sensible that he had taken a fancy to her)—this mark of it might be repeated. She was calculating in her mind how to receive or permit such a liberty, or whether she should not play the coquette—what she should say or do; and while her mind was agitated with these contending influences, her bosom rose and fell, and her rosy lips gave vent to many a sigh that seemed to come laden with grief from her heart, and the colour on her cheeks faded and flushed alternately, like gleams of sunshine chased at intervals by flitting clouds from a lovely landscape; and returning after every little absence with renovated splendour and beauty. She leaned on the back of the rude bench, resting her head on one of her hands, whose taper, ivory-

looking fingers were buried (some of them at least) in her brown curls; and whenever the eyes of Sebastian were turned towards them, they encountered hers, dark, full, glowing with the kind feelings of her heart, and glistening—not with tears; for why should she weep?—Yet what else but tears could render them so brilliant, so fascinating? Then every glance was the harbinger of a smile, tender and delicate, replete with grace and affection, yet moderated with an expression of timidity, if not of bashfulness. “Heaven and earth!” thought the Mulatto, as he gazed upon her. “An angel! or a devil come to tempt me from my duty, from my fidelity!—Can such things be? She is more beautiful at every glimpse, at every glance that my eyes dare take of her. She that discouraged me, and rebuked my cavalier impertinence, yet now fears—heeds me not.” “What are you thinking of, Michal?” said he at length, aloud.

“I am thinking,” she replied, with a blush which preceded her speech, “I am thinking of this same strange man, this Hamel, who is supposed to deal in spells and incantations, to hold conversations with spirits, and to bring about anything he chooses to undertake by invisible means. Know you not that this very cave in which we sit is said to be enchanted?”

“I could almost believe so,” replied Sebastian,

in a subdued tone of voice, as if indifferent whether Michal should fully understand him or not ; “ I feel I am myself enchanted ; but it cannot be by Hamel, nor by his agency : if I am enchanted, it is by yourself.”

The poor girl’s face and throat were suffused with crimson. “ By me ? Sebastian—by *me* ? ” She started from her position. “ No, no—not by me ; I have no such power ; and if I had, I would not use it against you. Do not think so of me. No, Sebastian, I wish to see you happy ; and if it depended on me, your days should be as happy —— ”

“ Sit down again, Michal,” said the Mulatto, interrupting her, and taking her hand, to which he felt it indispensable that he should communicate some gentle pressure, in return for her courteous assurance : “ sit down, Michal. I have no right to expect anything from you—no claim to your affection in any way. Would you lower yourself by attaching your destiny to that of a man darker than yourself ? ”

“ If you say this,” answered Michal, “ to mean you do not like me, I shall hear it with patience, and bear it ; but your skin is no objection to me. Perhaps you have been married in England.”

He shook his head *negatively*.

“ You have no wife ? ”

“ None.”

“ Well, Sebastian, I ask not to be your wife ; but if you do not like me, why did you kiss me ? ”

“ I *do* like you—I cannot help myself ; but, Michal, I am wrong ; I have no business to love you ; I am engaged to another.”

“ And who is that other ? ” said the soubrette. “ She may be prettier than I am ; but will she love you faithfully ? Will she be your slave ? My mistress will make me free : let me be near you, wait upon you, work for you ; but do not turn me away from you——But I know not what I say.”

“ Ah, Michal,” replied the Mulatto, “ you speak as you look—only what is amiable and affectionate—” (the poor girl’s tears chased one another down her cheeks ;) “ but why do you weep ? ”

“ I cannot help it—let me go home to my mother—I was foolish to come here. Let me go, Sebastian ; do not, do not—pray do not touch me again, if you are engaged to another wife :—do not make sport of me.”

It would certainly have seemed more honourable, and perhaps more humane, to have undeceived the pretty soubrette at once as to the obstacles which prevented her becoming even the creole wife of Sebastian ; but he felt a considerable difficulty, as well as delicacy, in trusting her with his secret ; and there was besides something of vanity (however hatefully attached to our

nature) so gratifying in having made a conquest of such a lovely woman, that he had hardly resolution sufficient to renounce at once the pleasure he derived from it, at the same time that he was making vows internally to take no advantage of her. Many a pretty girl's cheek has faded from the same cause ; and there are ladies too of fine feelings, who have trifled in a similar way with men of sense, until both parties have been rendered very miserable, very unfortunate, and very wicked :—from playing the fool they have got to playing the devil, and ended perhaps by playing the fool again.

The Quadroon, not being familiar with her pockets, was some time finding a handkerchief to wipe away her tears ; and Sebastian, but too delighted in assisting her, and sufficiently affected at the sight of her grief, produced his own for the purpose ; yet he would rather have kissed away those precious drops which, though not quite so large as those of the tender-hearted Pantagruel, had power to melt a more obdurate heart than his own. Indeed it would seem that his heart was but too sensible, at least to the impression made by the many charms of the lovely soubrette ; and it was in some measure owing to *her* resolution that he retained his self-possession, and adhered to his vow (if vow it were, as related in the last chapter) of refraining from attempting to

take any advantage of her situation or of her predilection for himself. It is better to avoid a precipice altogether ; and if to dance on the edge of one be a folly, how vain would it be for the dancer to have his eyes blinded, though by the hand of a pretty girl !

The tears were succeeded by smiles, and the smiles were followed again by tears ; but the Mulatto imprinted one kiss only, a kiss of peace, on the forehead of the beauty who now checked herself, to make inquiries about his affianced wife. At last, overcome with a sense of his injustice in trifling with her for a moment, he told Michal that he was engaged to be married to her mistress.

CHAPTER XIX.

Turn not away, I am no Æthiop ;
No wanton Cressid, nor a changing Helen ;
But rather one made wretched by thy loss.
What ! turn'st thou still from me ?

LONDON PRODIGAL.

HUMBLED and mortified, as the Quadroon could not but feel, yet she was sensible that there was something more than common in the behaviour of her gallant, something more honourable, after all, than she could have expected from any one else. He liked her, if he did not love her, it was sufficiently evident ; as evident as it was to him that he was beloved by her. Yet he had put her on her guard ; he had owned he was engaged to be married. Another, if he had been white, would have taken advantage of her affection or passion at once, and kept his secret to himself, at least until he chose to get rid of her. Such had been the reflection of the pretty Michal, even while the caresses of Mr Sebastian convinced her that her

person, which she imagined was all her fortune, was sufficiently to his taste. She might have thought his general plea of an engagement only an excuse to avoid a serious connection with her; but when he told her that he was affianced to her mistress, she turned aside from him with a smile of incredulity and a feeling of displeasure, thinking of course that he was making a jest of her and her tears. These she dried forthwith, as she arose from the seat, where she left her companion no less mortified than she was, and regretting that the poor soubrette should have reason to think less favourably of him than she had been disposed to do; not a little confused too as to the effect which he saw he had produced by the disclosure of his engagement.

“ Well, Mr Sebastian,” said the damsel, “ I shall return back to my mother, and leave you to be happy with her you love, whoever she is. Farewell; you will make a brave husband, for you are as secret and as mysterious as if you were the chief among the rebellious Negroes.”

“ Stay, Michal,” replied the Mulatto, “ till the heat of the sun is past: I have a message for your master.”

“ For my master?”

“ Yes, and another for your mistress;—and I would not part with you in any unkindness. Michal, it is but too plain——But I will not think

of what is past, except to cheer my heart with the conviction that you have not despised my dingy complexion. I thank heaven and your own goodness, that I have not thought to abuse your generous, your disinterested kindness towards an unknown unfriended stranger, such as I appear to be : but, Michal, I am not altogether what I seem ; and if I delay gratifying your commendable curiosity for a time, it is not that I am ungrateful to you, insensible to your worth and your excellence"—(the Quadroon heaved one more sigh)—“but yourself might be made unhappy, at least uneasy, by the knowledge of the circumstances in which I am involved ; and I must not stir till my trusty Nimrod shall have had time to apprise the governor and the council of the danger which threatens the island. I call him trusty, for it is his interest to be true to me, and he can gain nothing by treachery. You little think, Michal, what a tragedy was to have been performed to-night—no less than the massacre of your master, and the violation of his daughter.”

“What !” said the soubrette, turning pale with apprehension, “how much of your language should I believe ? Can it be ?”

“Aye—and his house to have been burned : this very Hamel owned it to me, though he will not tell me who are the conspirators.”

“ And will it be attempted ? ”

“ No : he has promised to prevent it.”

“ And why ? ” said the Quadroon.

“ For my sake, Michal. Your master has been already put on his guard——”

“ Yes,” answered she, interrupting him ; “ but he is not half watchful enough. You may tell me, Mr Sebastian, what you please about it ; I will not betray your confidence.”

“ I can tell you no more at present,” replied he ; “ for see—yonder comes Hamel again, is it not, from the woods ? No, it is the strange blind man, who vanished so unaccountably when I arrived here.”

“ Vanished ! ” said the soubrette. “ This is then the black man of whom you spoke to me before. What an ugly monster ! And why does he wear that black shirt ? I thought at first it was his skin. But he walks as if he were blind—does he not ?—so carefully ; and although he does not feel his way actually, he seems to measure every step. No wonder the place is bewitched : if such a creature as this is once seen gliding about in this fashion, there cannot long be wanting a story of a duppie. No wonder Hamel has the reputation of dealing with the evil spirit. But see, Sebastian, he comes towards us ! ”

“ Hush ! ” replied the Mulatto in a whisper, laying his finger on the Quadroon’s lips : “ be

silent—come farther into the cave; and let us watch him. If he comes near enough, I'll seize him, and find out who he is."

"Oh, touch him not, Sebastian!" said the timid girl. "If he is a spirit, he can strike you dead perhaps."

"He is no spirit, Michal, but a man like me. I can hear the tramp of his feet as he walks along the shore of the lagoon: who ever told of a duppie whose step was audible? Nay, Hamel counselled me to make him tell his purpose, if I should see him again."

"Hamel is a traitor," replied the Quadroon in the same whisper: "trust him not."

"Hush! hush! he draws near!"

The black man came with a steady pace towards the cave, having been some minutes coasting more than half of the little lagoon; during which the Mulatto and his companion had plenty of time to examine his person and attire. He seemed as old as Hamel, and not unlike him in size and features; but he was clothed in a black frock (fastened with a thin leathern belt, similar to that worn by the Obeah man) which descended to his knees: the rest of his person was naked, as he had nothing on his head, hands, legs, or feet. He stopped at the distance of a few paces from the cave, and raised his head as if he would have looked to the mouth of it; but it seemed as if

his eyes were covered with cataracts : and though Sebastian stepped out of the cave towards him, he appeared to be insensible of his approach, until the Mulatto demanded who he was ; when he sprang or rather darted into the lagoon, and disappeared. The Quadroon, seeing this, ran also out of the cave, to watch his rising again from the water. There was neither bush nor rock upon its margin, and the lagoon itself was not forty yards across ; but although the water continued agitated for a considerable time, while its buoyant circles rolled and sparkled upon the silvery shore, the black man did not rise again.

“ These Negroes,” said Sebastian, looking around with a most vigilant eye, “ are ‘almost amphibious, as I have known of old ; but he will not surely drown himself to escape our curiosity. I have heard that the pearl fishers can sink for half an hour ; but this man, who seemed almost decrepid as he walked, can scarce have practised diving to this extent. But we will give him time.”

“ No !” said the Quadroon with a sigh ; “ he will come no more.”

“ You do not think he is drowned, Michal ?”

“ I know not what to think. If he were a spirit, such as I have read of, fire, air, the earth, or the water, are alike to him : he can dissolve himself into the elements. No, Sebastian, he

resembles yourself—he is a mystery ; and when he seemed to be in your very possession, when you thought him yours, he vanished from your sight, as you will from mine.”

“ Never !” said he in return.

“ Why should you then entertain me with such idle tales as those you tell me ? Yes, yes, Sebastian ; you are not what you seem ; you say so, and I believe you :—but I *am* what I seem—a weak, vain, silly child, who had the presumption to wish to be of value in your eyes.”

The Mulatto laid his hand on her shoulder, leaned on it, and as she turned up her face as if to look on him, whispered in her ear—“ You cannot keep a secret : what would you think of me were I to tell you mine ? What would others think of me ? If I were but what I seem, Michal, I had been yours—yours only—too proud, too happy to be yours. I value you not the less—but I was not born to make you happy, and I will not make you wretched : you would despise and hate me ; and that at least I will not deserve. Come what will come, what must come, you shall think of Sebastian, if you ever recall him to your memory, as of one who did nothing to forfeit the kind thoughts you entertained of him. 'Tis strange this animal appears not : he must be surely drowned ; and what is become of our host Hamel ? Let us try to climb this rock, and see,

if it be possible, something more of this enchanted spot, as you call it. Perhaps from an eminence we may descry the duppie beneath the water ; for it seems as clear as crystal, though it is so deep and blue. But how shall we ascend ? You cannot clamber by the trees : there is a path—there was at least when I was young.”

“ There is certainly,” said Michal : “ for I have heard my mistress speak of it, and of another little lagoon, less than this, in the midst of some rocks.”

“ And a yellow snake beside the lagoon ?” said Sebastian.

“ Aye, indeed,” replied the damsel, looking at him with surprise ; “ there was a yellow snake in the story.”

“ Which your mistress struck with a stone.”

The Quadroon was all amazement again, and stopped to reconnoitre her companion, as if to assure herself he was only what he seemed. She ran him over with her black eyes, while the smile of which he could not divest himself was reflected on her pretty face ; and then said laughing—“ And you are engaged to my mistress—a brown man marry a rich buckra’s white daughter, one who is sought after by all the young gentlemen in the country !”

“ Whether I shall marry her, Michal,” replied he, “ must in some measure depend on you.”

“On me?” cried the damsel, laughing aloud. “I shall do well to recommend you who have disdained me : although I must not complain, as I am renounced for a white lady of the first distinction. But if you are already engaged to be married to her, what need have you of my services?”

“Michal, you will take a message for me, for letter I cannot write. I know my letters, siren,”—continued he, after a pause, during which he observed her smiling again; “but we have nothing to write on, or to write with, in this desert, except it be on the water, or on this sand, or on those——”

“Those what, Sebastian?” said she, interrupting his speech as well as his gaze, which was fixed on her features.

“Those lips of yours, which I must kiss no more.”

“Ah no! no more, Sebastian, except you think your mistress and mine would like your kisses from my lips.”

“We must leave pleasantry, and you shall be the bearer of my message ; but let us first return to the cave, and take some little rest. I have not slept for two nights. I found you sleeping, Michal : let me repose awhile on the same bench, and dream.”

“Not of me!” said the Quadroon.

“ Well, of your mistress, who resembles you but too much—so much, that in spite of myself I would fain, as I said, write my message to her on your rosy lips.”

“ No—rather write it and all your passion, on the water, or on the sands, that it may perish as soon as it is uttered, and nothing may remain to reproach you hereafter, when you shall have forgotten it.”

The Mulatto smiled, as they entered the cave. He laid himself on one of the benches, and soon fell asleep; while the Quadroon seated herself on a stone, and leaned against the rock at the entrance, her head resting on her fair hand, which was supported on her knee; and her dark eyes fixed intently on the object of her affection.

CHAPTER XX.

I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble. TEMPEST.

THE course of our narrative reverts now to the abode of Mr Guthrie and its inmates. We have seen how that gentleman had sallied from his chateau, to effect a plan or plans for its security; having commissioned his daughter to communicate his cause for apprehension to her mother, if possible without alarming her. But this was too difficult an undertaking for such a person as Joanna, already alarmed for herself. Mrs Guthrie was by this time up and dressed, in spite of the agitation she had endured the previous night; although the vigour she had now assumed seemed in a great measure the effect of despair. She listened, without betraying any visible emotion, to the account her daughter gave her of the canoe Negroes, and of Sebastian; and to the story of

the hints which the latter had left with Michal about the intended attack on their house and premises. The White Fairy's tale was repeated also. But although the unhappy lady suppressed the exhibition of her feelings, the melancholy news did not the less afflict her.

“ My poor Joanna !” she exclaimed at last : “ when will heaven be weary of persecuting us ? And what mischief is there yet in store ? Does not this come of preaching emancipation ? I knew how it must affect the minds of all the Negroes—who knows it not ? I have told Mr Roland so, and told him in vain :—would to God that the people in England, who interest themselves so much with our affairs, were but obliged to come here, and know what it is to expose their own lives and fortunes, while they are endangering ours. It would teach them a lesson of humanity at least, a science in which they seem to be almost ignorant, notwithstanding their professions.”

“ Why, my dear mother,” replied Joanna, “ are you then so partial to Mr Roland ? Every one says he is a most designing, a most dangerous man. He preaches almost murder to the Negroes. There is Michal heard him, not a week ago, preaching in the mill-house at Belmont, telling the Negroes that God Almighty made all men free alike, and that it was the devil who enslaved them ; and he bid them shake off the devil. He

said the people of England were determined to make them free, if they would take up the cross and follow him; and if the people of Jamaica prevented them, if the work were not done, the Negroes were to do it themselves; and that the bulk of their fellow-subjects would rejoice that it was done, however deplorable the consequences might be."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed the elder lady: "how horrible! I have no predilection for Mr Roland—I shudder when I think of him—I cannot talk of him: when I am dead, which I devoutly hope to be ere long, you will know, at least your father will—for I would not have *you* know, dear Joanna! what would afflict you almost beyond endurance—the cause, the sole cause, why I bear the visits here of that dreadful man. You think it is because he seeks to marry you. He is most anxious to do so, and in my opinion most unworthy; but he has acquired a power over me—how, I can never divulge while I live; and though I will die rather than recommend his suit, I dare not, cannot, discountenance it to his face."

"What would become of me, if he were to marry me?" said the daughter. "Would he still preach rebellion, and revolution, and emancipation?"

"Not one of them," replied Mrs Guthrie. "He has offered to preach the very reverse, and more—

over to hold up his party to ridicule, to unmask those whom he does not hesitate to call ignorant and fanatical hypocrites."

"What a hypocrite must he be himself!" said Joanna with a sigh. "Oh mother! cast him off; let *me* defy him, let *me* denounce him: I fear him not. And here is a person from Mr Fairfax—the captain of the canoe which was driven on the rocks last night in our bay: he says he was with Oliver in France, though I remember him not."

"What of him, what of him, Joanna?" said her mother. "Horror of horrors!—so young and so unprincipled—can such things be? Can heaven permit them?"

"Oh mother, these are falsehoods: Fairfax is the soul of honour. If you knew his real character, his kindness, his assurances to me! I have seen much of him in England and in France, where he travelled with us, and in Italy—always the same, frank, open, generous——"

"I am lost in wonder," replied Mrs Guthrie, "when I think on his having had the audacity to propose himself to you as a husband."

"Why, my dear mother? I have known him from my infancy, and I have loved him as long. He was the companion of my childish days and my childish thoughts. I thought, as he has promised, that our union, if ever it shall take place——"

“ Oh never, never !” said the elder lady.

“ Well, mother, it never shall, against your consent ; but *if* you *should* consent, our union would heal every breach between our families. It might help to soothe your own sorrows, to see me settled with a brave and generous husband ; and I should have nothing left to sigh for on this side of the grave.”

“ Joanna !” said her mother, in a severe tone of voice, “ it is impossible : you never can be the wife of such a——”

“ What mother, what ?” cried the alarmed young lady.

“ Such a monster. Do you remember the night of our fire, Joanna ? No—I recollect—you were from home.”

Joanna had put her handkerchief to her eyes ; and her mother could hear, though not without the deepest emotion, the convulsive sobs which seemed almost to burst her heart.

“ Unhappy fortune !” she continued : “ but I must not excuse him. No, Joanna ! I have told you that your union is forbidden : it would be horrible in the eyes of God and man.”

“ Impossible !” cried the daughter. “ This is more of Roland’s treachery ; some circumstance of his invention, as hideous as his own character. Oh mother, you are imposed on.”

“ Would to God I were : with what transport

should I see you give yourself to this young man, if he were unstained with crimes—at least a crime which bars your union for ever, and renders his very love, though it were now as pure as that of angels, an utter abomination,”

The grief of the elder lady became here as poignant as that of her daughter; but the consolations of the wretched were denied to her: the fountains of her tears were dried up; and hope had long ceased to present to her view any prospect of tranquillity but in the grave.

“Think not of Fairfax,” she said: “he cannot make you happy. While you entertain an idea of ever becoming his wife, you only add to the pangs which rend the heart of your unhappy mother. But here comes your father. See, Joanna, what he has done, what measures he has taken for our safety. Let not our own Negroes know our danger, or only those to whom we are to confide our safety.”

CHAPTER XXI.

Demand me nothing ; what you
Know, you know. OTHELLO.

MR Guthrie came into the piazza with the Negro whom Sebastian had sent to give him an account of the canoe being again stranded and brokep—the identical Drybones, otherwise called Nimrod, by whose assistance he had overpowered all who had the temerity to contend against him, and finally to make his escape, as he had felt bound to do, without involving them in any immediate peril.

“ You say your name is Nimrod—do you not ?” said the planter as he entered. “ Some paper, and a pen and ink, Joanna !”

“ Yes, master, Nimrod Drybones is my name.”

“ Where is your pass ?”

“ I have no pass : master will please to give me one, if I must have one to go to Spanish Town, to tell the governor what is going on.”

“ And what is going on, Mr Drybones ?”

“ D—d Negroes going to rise, to fight for the white women and cut the buckras’ throats.”

“ How do you know this ?”

“ Sebastian told me, and I know it besides too well : I know why I came from Cuba. It was lucky for you, master, that there was a storm last night, and the canoe was broke.”

“ Why so, sir ? I thought it unlucky, as my house was almost blown away.”

“ Lucky it was not quite blown away. Master must please to know, we came to thieve a young lady—that young lady, that pretty mistress—to make her queen of Jamaica, and wife to a man named Combah.”

“ The devil you did !”

“ Master, please not to be angry. Sebastian is a brave man : he ran the canoe upon the rocks, and flung the robbers into the sea.”

“ The devil he did ! Why he must be a devil himself. Where is he gone ?”

“ He is gone to a Negro house or a cave among the rocks of Belmont, to see a man who is a watchman to Mr Fairfax ; and Mr Fairfax is coming home tomorrow, to take possession of his estate, and turn out the attorney.”

“ Where !” said the planter, pursing up his mouth : “ where is he coming from ?”

“ He is coming from England, or France, or some other country.”

“ And he calculates on arriving tomorrow ? ”

“ Sure to come tomorrow—Sebastian says so. He is coming to you, master, to help him to take his estate from the attorney.”

“ Well done ! I hope he will make himself at home. Send for Roland—to tell him this.”

“ Mr Roland,” replied Joanna, “ is gone to windward : he went away yesterday.”

“ What the devil ! ” said the planter, “ does he want to windward ? If there is a riot in the country, I warrant him—”

“ In it, master ? ” said Drybones inquisitively.

“ Anywhere but in it,” replied Mr Guthrie : “ he is too fearful of his carcass. He is the general ; he keeps out of the scuffle ; he snuffs the battle from afar. He will be agreeably diverted, on his return, to find Mr Fairfax ready to receive him, and to hear him justify all the libels he has told of him. Poor Oliver ! I should indeed like to see him. He was always a gallant fellow ; though his cursed trustees have laid claim, as they say, in his behalf to all my aunt’s Negroes—but I think they cannot make a good title.—Well, Drybones, how came you to get your neck out of the halter ? Was it compunction, honour, gratitude, loyalty, or fear, that put it in to your wise head to let others fling themselves down the precipice, without taking hold of your hand in the leap ? ”

“ Master, I don’t know what is punction—I never had my neck in a halter.”

“ Very like it, I think,” said the planter. “ But tell me how you got out of the scrape.”

“ Master, I never had my neck in the halter.”

“ Well, but what induced you to give up the scheme? You say you came from Cuba to steal my only child.”

“ Yes, master, but I won’t thief her.”

“ *I must take care of that,*” said Mr Guthrie; “ but I wish to know the motive which induced you to give up the project which you had in view of making her queen of Jamaica: tell me that.”

Drybones seemed to listen to the planter’s question as if it were a demonstration of Euclid, giving it all his attention, and turning his head in every possible direction, as if to let the argument into his brain by his ears, eyes, nose, or mouth; but without effect: for although he elevated his chin towards the roof of the house, then dropped it on his bosom, looked sideways over his nose to the sky, to the floor, behind him on both sides, at both his hands—raised his eyebrows, and stuck his tongue half out of his squabby lips,—the question of the white man remained as it seemed wholly unintelligible, and he could only reply to it by the monosyllable—“ Sir?”

“ Confusion!” said the buckra in an undertone: “ it is all up with us. Mr Drybones is

struck foolish, as stupid as a cunning mule, or an old monkey who knows nothing but what is of no use except to himself." Then aloud—"You will not tell me, then, why you left your partners, and came here upon a different errand to that with which you set out."

"Yes, master," said the Negro, "I come here twice; the first time to thief Missy Guthrie, this time to say I won't thief her."

"Worse and worse! Did you help Sebastian to throw the Negroes into the sea?"

"Master, the Negroes got out of the sea again; there was nobody drowned: but Sebastian told them they would be hanged if they did not go home to their masters at Falmouth and Lucie."

"Did you throw anybody in the sea?"

"Yes, master, I threw the blunderbuss and two machets."

"Well, that is something: why did you do that?"

"Master, I was afraid, and my head lost itself; I did not know what I did."

"Now, the devil confound you!" exclaimed the planter, losing his temper. "Are you fit to go to Spanish Town to the governor? I'll have you put into the stocks forthwith, for an obstinate trickified ass."

"Master, I'm no rickify hass."

"I tell you you are a—you know what you

are. There, go along. Somebody!" (Every Negro answers to that name; and two or three waiting boys came running in.) "Take this good-for-nothing Negro: put him in the stocks in the hot-house."

Drybones made a polite bow, and went off, guarded by the servants, only requesting some one else might go to Spanish Town to the governor, instead of him.

"Aye, aye. Where is Michal?" cried the planter, still in a passion. "Let her set some of the women to talk with this ourang-outang, and see if they can make any sense of him. Drybones, indeed! I am afraid there is nothing to be got out of him excepting by moistening his bones, and his clay too. A pretty thing to send this fish—for he is hardly flesh—to the governor! His grace would think me as great a jackass as the man I sent. This morning I was put down by a Mulatto fine-gentleman, who baffled all my wit, and satire, and cross-examination: now I am defied by a bullet-headed, woolly-headed, ram-headed, old Negro. I should like to see what a jury would make of him. Where is Michal?"

"Michal is gone to Belmont," said Joanna: "I gave her leave."

"What! to go to Belmont? Did not you tell me that brown buccaneering-looking fellow was gone to Belmont? Why, Michal is gone after

him, I dare be sworn: I caught them philandering together this morning. These brown girls are the devil incarnate: they fly at a pretty fellow as a parcel of sharks rush at a piece of salt beef. But see; let Rose or Eleanor be sent for; tell them to make this Drybones drunk; give him grog enough; soften Mr Nimrod's heart, and loosen his tongue, and hunt out of him something more consistent than the tale with which he has been trying to bamboozle us. There is some mischief in the wind: I have been to the Custos, and have sent to the barracks; the militia will be called out; and if this proves to be a hoax of our friend Sebastian, Solomon — Solomon Guthrie — am I henceforth and for evermore. Boy! give me out my regimentals, and my cocked hat and sword: this is muster-day, and I must attend it."

CHAPTER XXII.

There was an ancient sage philosopher,
That had read Alexander Ross over,
And swore the world, as he could prove,
Was made of fighting and of love.

HUDIBRAS.

THE facetious Thomas Brown has observed, that “upon the report of a war among the princes of the earth, the devils keep holiday below;” and well they may, if there be any such in the region alluded to, which according to Peter Pindar cannot be a bit hotter than Jamaica, nor the long-tailed black gentlemen there a bit more wicked than the inhabitants above. We must suppose he meant the white inhabitants, as the rest of the population, black, brown, yellow, and tawney, are represented now-a-days, by the kind-hearted writers, speakers, and preachers, of Great Britain, who have never seen them, to be angels of various colours; men and women of all virtues—martyrs. But as to the holiday-keeping, these black martyrs make fine work for the devils, with the aid of the cli-

mate, and at little expense to themselves, as may be seen from the accounts of the Maroon wars, during the last of which, while the whites died by scores of fatigue or by the guns of their enemies, general Cudjoe lost in killed and wounded one man. We might expatiate on the horrors of the Negro war in St Domingo; but it is perhaps better to confine our attention to this, or rather to the prospect of this, before us.

The regiment of the parish as usual turned out to muster with the dragoons, all in military array. Nothing, as Voltaire says in his *Candide*, was ever gayer, finer, more brilliant, than the disposition of the army: trumpets, drums, cannons, fifes, and hautboys, filled the air with noise and smoke, and the hearts of the spectators with awe and confidence; those of the Blacks with the first, those of the Whites with the last. Both parties were used to similar exhibitions, but they felt nothing the less on that account. Major Guthrie (his exact rank was not ascertained) not being altogether a Mars or a field-marshal, came at a peaceable pace into the plain, surrounded by several gentlemen, anxious to hear something of this gang of pirates or robbers, and still farther curious to learn something of the aspiring Mr Combah. But though he was not a son of Mars, he had assumed a very military air with his red coat; rather saddened (that is the coat) as to

colour, with the many drenchings it had sustained on the muster-ground for the last few years, and a little tarnished as to the gold lace and epaulettes. The cocked-hat too, which he wore fore and aft, had the look of an old campaigner, being tanned by sun and rain into a good wholesome mahogany Mulatto-colour: still it was a poor substitute, as to comfort, for the umbrella beaver which he usually wore, and left his brown cheeks, and browner tip of the nose, to the mercy of the unmerciful sun which had blistered and peeled them many a time before in the like manner. This might have been prevented by flapping the cocked hat; but that would have been considered out of etiquette. He wore it very much over his nose, to give room for his little high pigtail, which was a sort of dwarf club, as we have before related, tied so close to his cranium—or, as a sailor would say, hauled taught home and belayed—that it gave his companions an idea of a ship being pooped by a stern sea, and going with her bows headlong into the trough of the water. His sword was a weapon of great antiquity, nothing of the modern regimental fashion emanating from the Horse Guards, but a real genuine Toledo, a rapier with the twelve apostles carved on its blade, which had descended as an heir-loom from his great ancestor Hugh Guthrie, one of those brave adventurers who in the time of the common-

wealth shared the fame and fortunes of Penn and Venables, and conquered the island from the Spaniards. This weapon had been one of his ancestor's trophies, and had been taken by him from a Spanish colonel at the attack of Rio Nuovo under Doyley. The rest of his equipage deserved no particular remark, if we except the Creole steed which carried him, a venerable well-bred horse, about five and twenty years of age, of a brown colour, with a white face and tail, and a pair of wall eyes.

The business of the muster was disposed of in the usual very military fashion, and horse and foot were dismissed with a hint or two to keep themselves on the alert for the present. But as nothing certain had transpired of the meditated revolt, except from the hints of Sebastian and the unsatisfactory statement of Mr Drybones, many of the militia doubted the existence of any cause for alarm, and cursed old Guthrie in their hearts for putting themselves and the population into any disquietude about what they considered an imaginary danger.

While this gentleman was gone to his parade, at the distance of some few miles from his plantation, Rose and Eleanor, the two brown girls who had their instructions respecting Drybones, repaired alternately to the wooden Bastile in which he was immured by one leg, and tried all

their skill to elicit a farther communication from him as to the reasons for his deserting his comrades : but although the hothouse-keeper indulged him with a plentiful dose of grog to console him for the tyrannous impressment of his limb, and the brown beauties played off many of their pretty fascinating arts, he was at first impenetrable to all questioning : and all he could be got to say was —“ Please to send to the gubna (governor) or there will be a rebellion ;” and “ Master Fairfax comes here tomorrow.” Yet as the spirit of rum began to evaporate, and the spirit of reason to prevail, it occurred to the individual Drybones, that his situation was a perilous one at best, as he subjected himself to the double suspicion of being a spy in the eyes of one party, and a traitor in those of the other ; and he thought after all he might as well tell Mr Guthrie the truth, that he had determined to take the white man’s side out of respect for Mr Fairfax, to whom his Negroes looked with a feeling of curiosity and affection, as he had been long absent, had been their favourite, and was so immediately expected. Besides, he had received from Sebastian such reasons of weight as those which the representatives of certain boroughs in England communicate to the individuals who find them particularly worthy of a seat in the senate : in short, he had a good understanding with the brown man, whose part

he had taken from these and other motives of his own; he knew that Sebastian would have the means of rewarding him very handsomely; and he was overawed by his superiority of mind and personal strength: his *genius* was rebuked by the Mulatto's, as Mark Antony's was by Cæsar's. Perhaps he would have thought of coming to this explanation with Mr Guthrie at once, if he had had any explanation on the subject with Sebastian; but he was afraid of compromising the character of that person, and knew not what might be elicited from him by cross-examination. He had therefore resolved to say nothing; but now that the blue-eyed Minerva came to his aid in a calabash of rum and water, he determined to let the cat out of the bag, if needs must, and try at the same time to escape from the bilboes, where he was as little at his ease as Asmodeus in his bottle.

With this intention, he sent for Miss Rose, and made her a fine speech about her beauty and good nature, and told her he wanted to talk with master Guthrie about Mr Fairfax; but as that had no effect, he went so far as to say he came from Mr Fairfax, who was in the island, disguised as a sailor, at his own house at Belmont; that it was he who had persuaded Sebastian not to let Miss Joanna be made queen of Jamaica, but to protect her and save her for him; that all this

however was a mighty secret, for if it were known, Mr Fillbeer the attorney would prevent his taking possession of his house.

“ Mr Fairfax is already at Belmont,” said Rose, peeping into Mrs Guthrie’s apartment to communicate the confession of the prisoner in a whisper; “ but it is a secret ; he is disguised like a sailor-boy : master will help him to turn out the mortgagee—will he not, mistress ?”

The ladies looked on one another with surprise ; but Joanna quickly remarked, that it must be an invention of Mr Nimrod’s ; or why had he not divulged the circumstance before ? The elder lady only uttered a deep sigh.

“ Mistress had better speak to him,” said the maid, “ and hear if he makes his story good. He says he must go to the governor, or somebody for him ; or there will be a rebellion in the island.”

“ I hope,” said Joanna, “ my father is not acting unwisely in detaining this man here. But he will return shortly ; and then we can send to Belmont to know if it be true as he reports.”

Rose returned to the prisoner ; but his impatience could not wait the arrival of Mr Guthrie, and was urging fresh disclosures in a whisper to the other brown girl, Eleanor. “ Mr Fairfax,” he said to her, “ is gone to seize a gang of Negroes belonging to him that ran away into the woods behind Port Antonio. Tell Miss Joanna that

master Roland is gone there too, and it can be for no good."

"No, indeed," said Eleanor (a frisky damsel;) "but tell us, Drybones, what's become of that tall brown man with the great hat and the chain to his sword."

"That is Sebastian," replied the Negro.

"Yes, but where is he gone to, and where is he to live, and who does he belong to?"

"He belongs to himself," said Drybones; "and he says you are really a pretty girl, and he wants to speak to you, at——"

"Where?" said the girl, interrupting him, and pinching his ear till he affected to roar as with pain. "He never saw me, sir, so tell no lies;—nor did you either."

"Hi! that is a good joke: did not I see him kiss missy?"

"Kiss me! kiss me, Nimrod!—Drybones! I never let a brown man touch my lips, I assure you: besides, he looked so fierce and terrible, and such a funny colour. Why, he was neither brown nor black, nor Sambo, nor Mestee; I don't know what colour he was. Lord! I would not let him kiss me, if he was a white man; much less since he is a Mulatto (and darker than I am) except I was two or three and twenty years old."

"Cha! cha!" replied Drybones; "you all run after him as soon as you see him. I know Miss

Michal is run away to have him for herself, and Miss Rose likes him too."

"I never have seen him," said Rose; "therefore I can't be in love with him. But a brown man! Why, you are a fool to talk so about him. Oh, here comes master: now, Drybones, speak the truth—don't lie."

Mr Guthrie came into the hothouse with two gentlemen, and having turned out the girls, interrogated the prisoner again with more success than before. He had had time to collect himself, and told a sufficiently connected story to induce the planter to set him at liberty, or rather to despatch him with two trusty Negroes to Spanish Town, according to his wish. The matter of Fairfax's disguise rather puzzled him, though he knew the difficulties his neighbour would have to contend against in getting possession of his property from a rapacious and unprincipled puritan, who had, in conjunction with Roland, plotted to keep it for ever from the real owner. No wonder Peter Pindar should say the people were as wicked as devils:—but of this anon.

Mr Guthrie returned to the house with his friends, set his guards, prepared his arms, and eat a hearty dinner; as every man of sense would do, who expects an attack of anything but apoplexy; seeing that valour, which is next in rank to discretion, depends principally on the food of the

body, at least much more so than on the food of the mind, for the time being. “Roast beef against terrors.” According to Mr Gill—

“ He that would fortify his mind,
His stomach first should fill.”

A libation of Madeira wine is not a bad addition to the flesh of bulls and goats, and would have been quite as acceptable to the immortal gods of Greece as it was to the demigod in arms, Solomon Guthrie, esq. as he had styled himself, who sat up in his piazza, with one or the other of his eyes open, to a late hour; and then peaceably falling asleep on a sofa, dreamed, in spite of musquitos, till daylight.

CHAPTER XXII.

Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 'tis morning!

OTHELLO.

THE morning had no sooner dawned, than our man of war (though he was a most peaceable creature, and had assumed his weeds of peace, having adonized himself in his own fashion—that is, with an umbrella hat, a light grey coat, or coatee—if we may use such a term,—and a pair of large white trowsers, which overwhelmed his boots) mounted his wall-eyed nag, and rode to Belmont, to satisfy his curiosity respecting the return of Mr Oliver Fairfax to 'the demesnes of his ancestors, the first of whom was of the family of that Fairfax who had cut such a figure in the commonwealth of England, and had been a contemporary friend of Hugh Guthrie, from whom our individual was descended. The young man Fairfax had spent a great portion of his early life in Jamaica, and had been the frequent inmate of Mr Guthrie's house, where he

had had opportunities of forming his earliest attachment; and though he was eight years older than Mr Guthrie's daughter, that circumstance did not prevent the parents on both sides from flattering themselves with the prospect of a future and perfect union between their families. Individuals of each had intermarried in ages past; and some of them, dying without issue, had left their properties to be managed jointly by members of both families, with legacies and encumbrances to this cousin, and that aunt, the nephew or the grandchild; and, as too frequently occurs in Jamaica, (and all the other islands of the West Indies, unfortunately)—it happened that an estate was now and then ill managed; that there were bad seasons, bad times, oppressions to suit the policy of Great Britain with respect to her own private and peculiar interests, wholly independent of the colonies—(such as the navigation laws, war taxes on sugars, prohibitions of sending refined sugar to England or Europe, prohibitions of all intercourse with America, &c. &c.)—which occasionally prevented the estates from yielding any revenue, and even added to the incumbrances on the properties. In consequence, the legatees often got little or nothing, and being poor themselves, and sued by their creditors, were obliged to sue in return, and by such misfortunes disturb the harmony of all parties. The managing lega-

tees were accused of incompetency ; their successors managed worse ; debts were accumulated, Negroes mortgaged, and difficulties of all kinds augmented (as they still continue to do) on the heads of that most unhappy class of landholders, that devoted party whose misfortune it has long been, whose crime it now is, to be the proprietors of other human beings with black skins. The late Mr Fairfax used to regret that he could not wash them white : for then the spiritual party in England, he said, would let them go to heaven or to the devil how they chose, and not pack off all their own rubbish, and the rubbish of England and Ireland, to help them there. A late celebrated author regretted the Irish were not black, as then they would have a claim to the merciful consideration of their white fellow-creatures, to which they have now no right whatever, as may be seen any day in the year.—But to return to Mr Fairfax : he had in his turn inherited the property of Belmont and other estates, with claims on them from half a score of Guthries and Fairfaxes in England and elsewhere ; which claims the estates, thanks to the holy men of England (that is, the ultra pious, and others interested in the importation of East India sugar) could no more pay than the aforesaid pious pay for the property which they are most religiously pleased to confiscate in the West Indies, to save

their own souls from the devil. The estates (some of them at least) were sold at a miserable depreciation ; the half of the wretched price for which they were sold was as yet unpaid ; and Mr Fairfax had found, after all his sacrifices, that he could not carry on this his reserved estate of Belmont without assistance from a merchant in England. Things were not then quite so bad as at present : an agent was found, money advanced, supplies sent, and crops returned, without any benefit to the proprietor. The debt increased ; the saints demanded emancipation ; the agent demanded, and obtained, a mortgage. Still the debt increased, as sugar and rum were worth nothing ; the saints were clamorous for emancipation ; the mortgagee threatened to foreclose. Lastly, sugar and rum being no better, the saints began to bully the government in England ; the government in England began to worry the government here :—
as

“ The dog began to worry the cat,
The cat began to kill the rat.”

The mortgagee got a judgment, and entered into possession.

Here his deputy had been for four years, without bringing the estate to sale, or rendering any account to the proprietor, the present Mr Oliver Fairfax ; his father having died in the interim, and left him sole heir to all the remains of what

his ancestors had enjoyed, with claims also to a certain extent on Mr Guthrie's estate, and to a gang of Negroes left to that gentleman under the ricketty will of an old lady whose heir-at-law young Fairfax had proved himself to be. The English mortgagee had disputed this will on behalf, as he gave it out, of Mr Fairfax; but literally to get the Negroes, between seventy and eighty in number, placed (for their *mutual* benefit, of course) on Belmont estate, to work out his debt; and the mortgagee seemed to have every prospect of succeeding.

It happened that the mortgagee, who had spent a part of his life in Jamaica, previous to his setting himself up as a merchant in England, and had amassed a considerable fortune there, had found it convenient to attach himself to the African Society about the same time that he commenced business; and some one or two of the members of this body had recommended the present deputy of the mortgagee, his attorney, the trustee in possession, to manage the estate for him.

Mr Fillbeer had been a saint! (*fuit ilium!*) as well as a brewer of no credit, but much renown, who was fined so often for using villanous drugs in his composition that he was ruined, and came out to Jamaica to repair his fortune, or rather (as the old one was not mendable) to make a new one. His religious friends had put him at last

into a good thing ; and he lived much like other planters' attorneys—with all the consolations of this world, and nothing to pay for. His religion was still as good as new ; for he was not likely to wear it out in his present birth. He wore it less often than his hat ; but he had it, like the hat which hung half the day and all night on a peg, always at hand in case of emergency. At other times he was not particular about theology or divinity, and thought the Negroes worked as well, and as happily, and as profitably, as if they went to meeting on a Sunday, instead of selling their commodities at the Bay.

This heathen practice of keeping a Sunday market he affected to wink at, in compliance with the prejudices of his new neighbours. He allowed also his book-keepers to entertain themselves in adding to the happiness and gay costume of those sable or brown beauties whose charms they found irresistible ; and he did not altogether escape the suspicion of a few such intrigues himself ; although, as he had lately buried a terna-gant Presbyterian wife, who had long lived with him, such reports must have been all scandal and invention.

Such was the person in possession of Belmont ; who knew, although it had only come of late to the knowledge of young Fairfax, that when the mortgage had originally been granted by the

father, it had been so done only for his life. The young man had consented to the sale and to the mortgage of other properties ; but his father had not permitted him to do so in this instance—at least he had not consulted him ; and though the elder Mr Fairfax had appointed his English factor his executor, and made him trustee for the management of his properties, until they should be sufficiently relieved from debt, he had by a saving clause stipulated, that no act of the trustee should be valid without the approbation of his son.

After a partial education in England, Oliver Fairfax had returned to Jamaica at twenty-one years of age, and had remained there for three years ; when he departed again for England very suddenly, to arrange some matters with his father's factor, difficulties having arisen out of the times, as before stated. During his residence there he had opportunities of renewing his acquaintance with Miss Guthrie, who had been sent *home*, as it is called, for her education. He had likewise contrived to meet her on the continent, and attended the party with whom she travelled through France and Italy. The intimacy which this tour allowed, had revived all the tender recollections of their youth. They were united by ties of kindred, friendship, community of interests and affections, of country, and even of locality. They were the last heirs of two honourable fami-

lies, whose fortunes had within the last twenty years been wofully depreciated by the cruel and fatal policy of the mother country, and were now endangered, in addition to that depreciation, by the interference of the Emancipators.

The consciousness of this, which ought to form a bond of union among all West Indians, helped at least to draw closer the ties which united these young persons in heart and sentiment. They were aware that a marriage would be highly agreeable to their relations; and they knew that it would end all disputes and animosities on the score of property and inheritance. The lady returned first to Jamaica; the gentleman was speedily to follow; vows, promises, had been given reciprocally; and not the slightest apprehension on the subject had ever caused either party a moment's uneasiness until, upon her arrival in the island, Joanna had communicated the particulars of her connexion with Oliver to her mother, with whose feelings regarding it the reader is already acquainted. Roland had found it proper to his interests to put a bar to the union of the lovers, and had spread very extraordinary tales respecting Fairfax, who happened to have taken his departure from the island the morning after the fire at Mr Guthrie's, at the time when that gentleman was a prisoner in Guadaloupe. He had always entertained a great dislike to

young Fairfax for his independent spirit, and for having taken the liberty of exposing from time to time the preacher's pretensions to sanctity. He had therefore denounced him as an atheist in his absence, and had laid the crime of robbery, at least of piracy, to his charge, for having embarked in a ship from which a part of the crew had been known to desert and join some adventurers in Cuba, who in taking a prize had exercised great cruelties on their prisoners in their endeavours to extort from them the surrender of their valuables, and had put some of them to death. Two of the party had been afterwards apprehended in the island, condemned, and executed; and Roland, who attended them spiritually before they suffered, had affected to bring from them a communication to Mr Guthrie, relative to the participation of Fairfax in the atrocities for which they were put to death. He had not scrupled to charge him with murder as well as piracy; and as he had already convinced Mrs Guthrie that Fairfax was guilty of a crime which had ruined her peace of mind, she was unable to refuse her belief to the otherwise almost incredible stories which the Missionary detailed respecting him. Mr Guthrie, being unacquainted with the aforesaid crime, was not so credulous as his wife, and doubted every one of the facts declared by the Missionary; but he was not aware of the machinery by which the

will of his relation had been pulled to pieces ; he gave Fairfax full credit for that ; and although he had always felt the greatest regard for his young friend, he could not altogether forgive him for instituting, as he thought he had done, this process against him, and for threatening (as the trustee had done) to enforce his claims for certain legacies on the other properties of his old friend.

From these circumstances, Fairfax stood very low just now in the estimation of Mr Guthrie, and was absolutely execrated by his wife. Joanna wavered not ; but he had no other friends that he was aware of, except that the old planter, in spite of his ill will, retained a sneaking kindness for him, and meant, now that his curiosity led him to Belmont, to lend him, if there should be occasion, any assistance that he might want to repossess himself of his estate.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Alas ! it is the baseness of thy fear
That makes thee strangle thy propriety.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

WITH this compound feeling of curiosity, animosity, and benevolence, the old planter came jogging along on his white-faced charger beneath the sunny rocks of the sea beach, with his valet on a mule behind him ; when he espied at a distance the evangelist Roland rising from out the river, where i he hoped he had washed away all the abominations of the heathen orgies in which he had been made to participate. There was no mistaking him : his solemn walk—even in the river—his lank locks, and his demure cast of countenance, betrayed him successively to each of Mr Guthrie's eyes, and no less quickly to those of the horse, who by his starting and snorting gave indications of feeling himself in the presence of something very offensive or horrible to him.

The Missionary had hastened to the bank of

the river as the old gentleman quitted the sea shore, and had got on the chief of his clothes by the time the charger could be brought to face him. His coat was still daubed with dirt and blood, and his old brown castor was squeezed up into all manner of figures, as if it were a piece of rumpled brown paper instead of a hat. He placed it with an awkward affectation on his yet reeking cranium.

“ Good morning, Mr Roland,” said the old gentleman. The Missionary made a bow, at which the horse started, much to the satisfaction of Roland, who wished that the old planter were drowning, so his attention (though to his own death) should be diverted from him and his disfigured garments. “ An early bath, Mr Roland. Have you been far to windward ?”

The horse made another horrible start; for, according to the custom of the country of shaking hands at every meeting, the Missionary put forth his arm to receive the salute of his acquaintance; and whether it yet retained the odour of the filth with which it had been stained, or whether it was the mere caprice of the beast, the latter seemed to be alarmed beyond measure by the motion of the man of grace, wheeled round as often as the rider, by rein, and whip, and spur, could bring his face to bear on that of Roland, and snorted and reared, very much discomposing the seat of the

horseman. All this time the Missionary was hatching an answer or a story ; but the old gentleman, still battling with his steed, relieved him from his temporary embarrassment by observing, that Roland must certainly have the devil at his elbow, which was visible to the horse, although his own eyes could not penetrate to the sight of the fiend.

“ Your eyes are penetrating too,” said the other with a forced smile. “ I hope your excellent lady is in good health ; likewise Miss Joanna.”

“ No, indeed,” replied the planter ; “ neither one nor the other. My wife gets worse and worse. Here, boy, take my horse to the stable at Belmont, and tell Mr Fillbeer, with my compliments, I shall walk up and breakfast with him. Where have you been, Mr Roland ? Why, what’s this ? Blood on your clothes ! Who has done this ? Are you wounded—hurt anywhere ? What are these crosses ? My God—my God ! *Dii quibus imperium*—Harlequin smelt you—and your coat all bedizened as if you had been dragged through a horse-pond—foh ! I smell you myself. Where did you get all this ? In the storm ? I ask pardon, Mr Roland : I hope I am not impertinent.”

The Missionary was never taken more aback in his life. There was a tolerable confusion in his face (as well as a few contusions) before the planter had remarked it ; but when Roland saw

the two eyes of his acquaintance running him over and over, and round and round, like two galleys plying round a becalmed or distressed frigate, one taking up a position to fire on its bows, while the other blazes away on its stern,—he felt as much alarm and consternation individually, as that which the whole crew of the frigate would experience collectively, and looked more woful, pitiable, and destitute, than the frigate would do by the time all her masts were shot away, and she had seven feet water in her hold. The planter could not help feeling for him, as the Missionary turned up the whites of his eyes, and heaved a sigh.

“ You have been beaten too : why, you have got a black eye ! ”

“ It has pleased the Lord ”——said Roland.

“ What ! to give you a black eye ? By what natural means, may I ask—nothing miraculous ? ”

“ It has pleased the Lord—— ”

“ To drag you through a horse-pond ? ”

“ A truce, sir, I pray,” said the Missionary, again turning up the white of one eye, and the black and blue of the other. “ It has pleased the Lord to chasten his servant. The Lord giveth and taketh away.”

“ Well, well,” resumed the planter, “ that is some consolation at all events. Not a drunken frolic—you were chastened, eh ? A caterwauling ?

I beg pardon. And you lost your sweetheart—was it a black-fisted one? a Sappho? *Lesbi puella!*—And is this *your* blood, all over your clothes and your shirt? Did she give you a bloody nose as well as a black eye?—Unfeeling jade! *Infelix Dido.* What a Jezebel! She felt nothing. Why, what a figure she has made of you! You cannot shew yourself for a week.”

“Sir, sir!” exclaimed the preacher in confusion, “you misapprehend—you misunderstand. There was no Sappho, nor even a Dido, nor Jezebel, nor incontinent Rahab, nor any female concerned.”

“Then who has torn your clothes in this fashion? Have you been wrestling with the Lord?”

“Fie, Mr Guthrie! Knowing my persuasion, my belief on subjects of religion, my calling—as I may call it,—I should have hoped to hear from your lips nothing that could give me pain on that score.”

“Not a jot,” returned the planter. “I ask pardon; I mean no offence to you or to religion; I wish only to avenge you on those who have maltreated you. *Antecedentem scelèstum*, you know, with the club foot.”

“*Scelèstum*, indeed,” muttered the Missionary, still overwhelmed with the conviction of his most pitiable situation. “‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord: I will repay.’”

“ You would rather pay it yourself, Mr Roland, I suspect,” rejoined Mr Guthrie. “ But after all, what is it ? Here has been a parcel of rascals at my house, to steal my daughter, and murder my wife and myself. If the storm had not smashed their canoe, we should have all been provided for by now.”

The face of the Missionary turned to a deadly paleness, as he listened to this communication. He dared not raise his head to encounter the keen glances of Mr Guthrie, who fixed on him his two eyes, each having a power like that of Tamerlane, or almost that of the caliph Vathek, on this occasion. Roland could have wished they were those of a basilisk, that he might have been struck dead on the spot, and so his conscience set for ever at rest.

But the old planter continued :—“ We have reports of an insurrection to windward among the Negroes : where can you have been buried, not to hear of it ? We wanted you yesterday too ; the militia are on the alert ; and I have further news for you ; our neighbour Fairfax is expected here today ; but this is a secret, I believe. But what is the matter with you, Mr Roland ? Why are you so pale ? or rather so black ; for the whiteness of one part of your face makes the other look as black as if it were the devil’s own. What ails

you?—Let us go into the house : yonder is Mr Fillbeer looking for us ; see, he is coming down the piazza steps to meet us. He will wonder, as well as myself, at your extraordinary appearance ; and I am at a loss to understand why you make a mystery of it. Have the Negroes insulted you, or is it a white man ? Or have you been wrestling with a duppie in your sleep—an incubus ? Or have you been *Obeah'd* ?”

“ Ah, forbear !” said Roland with an expression of disgust. “ Make me not the subject of your mockery.. I have met with an earthly affliction, which I must bear as a Christian.”

“ But will you not tell us what it is, that we may do you justice ?”

“ Justice !” repeated Roland : “ justice !—I have been maltreated by Negroes ; and when occasion serves, I will call on you, my respected friend, to do me justice in the eyes of the righteous. Vengeance on my own part I disclaim altogether. Would that the whole island, the whole world, could forgive as well as I can !”

“ Ah,” replied Mr Guthrie, “ we should have the golden age, the *Saturnia regna*, instead of Satan’s reign :—but you must tell us of your discomfiture ; our own safety requires it. The Negroes must not insult, much less strike, the Whites with impunity, and least of all a holy man of God, a

delegate from the pious fraternity of Wesleyan methodists. Why, if we were not to inquire into your case, we should have a remonstrance from the house of commons in England to our house of assembly here, on the subject; we should be taxed with wilfully degrading you and your calling.—Mr Fillbeer, your most obedient.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

A little, round, fat, oily man of God,
Was one I chiefly marked among the fry.
He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
If a tight damsel chanced to trippen by;
Which when observed, he shrunk into his mew,
And straight would recollect his piety anew.

THOMSON.

By this time Mr Guthrie, with his disconsolate and bewildered companion, had reached the house where Mr Fillbeer, with an obsequious bow, was ready to welcome them to breakfast.

“Your humble servant, Mr Guthrie; pray walk in. Friend and brother Roland, I am charmed to see you.” (The word brother sounded hatefully in the Missionary’s ear.) “Hola! hola! man, what have you been fightifig with?—Not with that terrible fellow they call Sebastian, who they tell me is coming here to take possession of the estate for a crew of pirates and revolted Negroes?”

“Hah!” said Mr Guthrie, “is that the report?”

“Indeed is it,” replied Mr Fillbeer. “Why, Roland, how did you pass the night of the storm? And why did not you put up here, or at the other estate above, when you spoke to the Negro girls? They told me yesterday of your having passed, as sweet as a nosegay; and that you inquired for M'Lachlan's estate, where the Negroes have run away. But how came you by this disfigurement?”

“Aye,” said Mr Guthrie, “he's not so sweet now as he was before. He says that some Negroes have been thumping him; but where, when and how, he is loth to communicate.”

“The where is pretty evident,” observed Mr Fillbeer; and the how may be guessed at by the marks: these are not chops or stabs.”

“No,” rejoined Mr Guthrie, “they are punches, fisticuffs. I thought at one time it had been a Medea, some jealous nymph, some enchantress, who had been dying his skin for him, without giving him an opportunity of any revenge—*Nil habet ista sui*;—but he denies it.”

“If it may please you to spare my feelings for a few minutes,” said the preacher, “I will endeavour to relate some of the particulars by and bye; but in the meantime allow me to retire, and arrange my dress, before I sit down to breakfast.”

So saying, he stalked off into a chamber which

was pointed out to him, where he pulled off his coat, and fell to washing out the blood-marks, though not before he had almost fainted at the sight of his black eye and his blue face, which he now saw reflected in the glass for the first time. "What a catastrophe!" said he to himself: "these blood-marks may lead to all sorts of suspicion. I cannot shew myself; I cannot give an account of myself: nay, my boy Cuffy may have already told of my encounter with the black idiot who would not be satisfied without cramming his thick head into a crown. Merciful heaven, what horrible nonsense! As if the tinker and the toyman could consecrate the deputy elected by the Lord; as if——But where is Cuffy?—Come in, Cuffy, and shut the door."

While the door is shut, let us give some account of Mr Fillbeer and his conversation.

The attorney was a round fat man, with a bald head, or partly bald, like the tonsure of an ultra priest. What hair he had was black, and—as Mr Guthrie was wont to say—" *Nimum lubricus aspici:*" it began just above the bump of philoprogenitiveness, extended round to the organs of acquisitiveness just in front of the ears, and reached down behind to his shoulders, as lank as so many rats'-tails. He had large grey eyes, a huge bottle nose, and behind, as much as beneath it, a

mouth like that of Cerberus—a triple mouth, with a triple chin, and three teeth in all; two like the fangs of a wolf in the upper jaw, the third standing like a pyramid in the desert below, for men to wonder at. He had not *lost* the rest; as, according to his own account, they were all safe in his drawer, where he had deposited them *gradatim*, during an unpleasant salivation he had found it necessary to undergo a few years back. It was to the same cause that he attributed the loss of his hair, being, as he said, the only bald individual of his family; for not having yet reached his fiftieth year, he wished to consider himself, like Falstaff, only in the vaward of his youth. He was almost as wide as he was high, and his circumference was fully equal to his stature; so that he had not looked upon his knees for a year or two, and all the buttons and button-holes of his waistcoat had parted company, or were bent on a separation, in spite of sundry efforts of the estate's nymphs to patch and attach them. He was not an ill-tempered man, where his interest was unconcerned—else he had not been so fat; and there was reason to suppose that if he had never affected the saint, he would not have thought it worth his while to take up the character just now. Yet he was bound to be consistent; and report said that he was in the habit of supplying the African Society and the Society for

Suppressing Slavery with a few occasional tales, such as he had been taught would be most grateful to those liberal and enlightened gentleman. He was in fact, with all his fat paunch and his rubicundity of visage, what the world calls a deep fellow, subtle and clear-headed, and close-fisted ; greedy and rapacious as the grave, and like that, retaining all that came within his grasp : he rendered nothing on which he had once laid his clutches. Hence one of the reasons why Mr Fairfax was still deprived of his estate, and why for four years he had had no accounts ; the agent in London even complaining of the delay, and referring Mr Fairfax to his *locum tenens* on the spot.

Such was the fat, sleek, pursy gentleman who now very officiously poured out a cup of coffee for Mr Guthrie, and handed him some hot rolls, pointing to the other eatables with all the grace of which he was capable, and inviting his guest to attack them as he pleased—in detail, or at once in a pitched battle. — “ Mr Roland,” said he, “ will be here anon ; but what has happened to him ? The Negro girls at the other estate said that he shook hands with them, and that he was all perfume and pomatum, and was certainly going to see some lady with whom he was in love ;—but where ? in the back settlements ? I know of no habitations—”

“Have you here at present,” said Mr Guthrie, as if not adverting to the attorney’s speech, “a sailor in distress?”

“No,” replied the other; “not that I know of; have you heard of such a person? I have heard only of a boat’s crew who came to your house, and a brown man calling himself Sebastian, who I understand killed two of his comrades, and flung them into the sea, and talks of paying us a visit here. We shall be happy to see him.”

“Did you hear that there was a report of insurrection to windward?”

“No!” cried the fat man, as if surprised.

“Well, sir,” continued Mr Guthrie, “I ought to tell you that a Negro who assisted the Sebastian of whom you have heard, says that not only is a revolt planned, but that a man named Combah is to be king.”

“I never heard the name,” said Fillbeer, perspiring at every pore.

“Nor I,” resumed the other: “it may be true or false: and I think it right to apprise you as well, that the same Negro asserts, on the strength of this Sebastian’s assurance, that Mr Fairfax is in the island, and will be here today, to take possession of his estate.”

“Here today!” cried the fat man, blowing out his cheeks.

“Here today,” repeated Mr Guthrie with a smile, helping himself at the same time to a slice of ham. “Today—this very day.”

“This day !” re-echoed Fillbeer with a fiend-like snarl, such as one might expect from a goule or an ogre. “Fairfax ! Let him come at his peril ; I have put the estate’s people on their guard already ; let him come if he dare.”

“He dare, be assured,” rejoined the planter ; “he is as brave as a lion ; and if you know that he has a claim on the estate prior to that of the mortgagees, I am at a loss to see how you can refuse him possession.”

“Possession !” said this ton of man, half choked with fat and rage, as well as with a great gulp of hot coffee which had taken the road to his lungs instead of keeping to the alimentary canal : “Possession !”—But he could not go on for coughing ; and Mr Guthrie took the opportunity of repeating the word.

“You know, Mr Fillbeer, that this particular estate was entailed by his grandfather, and cannot be alienated from him without his consent : his right is indisputable. What other powers he has with respect to the other estates, I know not ; however, the law will not only reinstate him here, but set aside altogether the mortgagee’s claim for any advances since the death of old Mr Fairfax ;

and indeed the personal estate will only be liable for the previous advances."

"He consented," said Mr Fillbeer (recovering himself at last) "with his father, that the properties should be placed in the hands of a trustee for the liquidation of debts; and let him attempt an entrance by force at his peril."

"Why, what would you propose to do?" said the planter, squinting at him.

"I know how to resist him," replied the other with a growl. "He is a robber, if not a murderer; a pirate, and I know not what—"

"Until he is so proved, he is an innocent man," rejoined Mr Guthrie. "He is my neighbour, my kinsman; and if he should claim assistance from me, what will you consent to? Will you leave the business to arbitration?"

"No, I'll be—hang'd first, I mean—God forgive me. Here I am, Mr Guthrie, with a power of attorney from the mortgagee in possession:—I say no more."

"Ah!" thought the planter, "here stands a post—touch it, if you dare."

"You are bound in some measure," said the round man, "by rights of hospitality: you would not sanction or encourage injustice."

"Bound to yourself, you mean, Mr Fillbeer?" said the other. "Aye; why, certainly, I have the highest respect for Mr Fillbeer; but I do not

know how—when I am here, I always fancy myself the guest of my old or rather young friend, Mr Fairfax : these are his slaves, his buildings, his cattle grazing yonder, his provisions, raised by his Negroes on his own land, or sent out from England at his expense. He has been an unfortunate young man perhaps ; but I cannot fancy him guilty of the crimes you lay to his charge—robbery, murder, and what not.”

“Mr Roland is my authority,” said the attorney.

“Mr Roland will be puzzled to prove any one thing with which he charges him ;—but where is Mr Roland ?”

“I will soon see for him,” said the host, and walked impatiently across the piazza to the chamber where the holy man was still wiping out the stains upon his clothes, and coaxing his neck-cloth to hide the blood upon his shirt. The little man (little in stature) was so fat, so punchy, and so pursy, that his locomotion was anything but active or elegant ; yet, as if sensible of the awkwardness of his whole figure, and of the *dumpiness* of his legs, he had endeavoured to adapt a sort of elasticity to his gait by rising on his toes before he lifted his feet from the ground ; so that he seemed to walk with less ponderosity than might have been expected from his bulk ; and while the floor creaked and bent beneath this hitch in his

waddle, his lank rats'-tails waved up and down with a most laughable rise and decline on his round shoulders, rendered more ridiculous by the arrogant air with which he carried his big nose aloft, and puffed out his bloated and toothless jowls. Mr Guthrie could scarcely retain his gravity, as he saw him thus march off, looking something like a fat ox erect on the stumps of his hind quarters (on his houghs, for instance) to the chamber of the Missionary, with whom he spent some few minutes in private conference before they returned together to the breakfast table, where the planter with admirable *sang froid* kept up a very persevering attack on the coffee and cocoas during the time he was left to his own reflections.

CHAPTER XXV.

I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled ; and I think the issue will be—I shall have so much experience for my pains.

OTHELLO.

MR FILLBEER came back with the same jaunty spring in his march, leading or rather dragging forward Roland, who came—not like a lamb to the slaughter, nor yet like a sheep (though he could not divest himself of a most sheepish look) but rather like a bull dragged to the stake. His host, or his executioner in this case, was scandalized at his appearance, and had made him don one of his own shirts and neckcloths, while his friend's were washed and mended. The former did not fit the Missionary over-tight ; but as the cassock hides all, we need not remark on that circumstance : it was wide enough, if it was too short, and made up in breadth for its want of length ; so that literally it was as broad as it was long—physically, and we may suppose also

metaphysically; for the preacher was too much hustled and confused to bestow a minute's thought on such a circumstance as this.

Elated as the attorney felt at having a witness so ready at command, to ensure him a triumph over Mr Guthrie, he was notwithstanding very much astonished, and almost confounded, to find Roland so unwilling to account for the black eye he had got, and for the other marks of discomfiture and disgrace which he carried about him : for still the Missionary was not a jot more forward in his inventions, and feared, as we have seen in the case of Drybones, to say anything by which he might commit himself, or which might at present or at any future time be brought against him, to prove the purpose for which he had gone to the scene of his last night's adventures, and the business in which he had been engaged. His bosom burned with spite and indignation against both Hamel and Combah ; yet how could he denounce them without involving himself? He was a man of much superstition, notwithstanding the general doctrine he preached ; and though he felt some compunction in breaking the hideous oath which had nigh choked him, the demon of revenge had spirited him up already to a resolution of despising it ; and he would not have halted at any falsehoods with which his genius might inspire him for the furtherance of

his object, provided they could not be disproved by circumstances : for he disdained the testimony of the Blacks, taking for granted that they would lie in their turns, and knowing that if they spoke truth, their evidence would not affect him, a white man : it could not be admitted against him in a court of justice. Besides, he meant at all hazards to strike the first blow, though he was puzzled how or where to plant it.

Never was assembled perhaps a more extraordinary triumvirate, as to manners, morals, and appearance, than that formed by the three persons who now sat round the breakfast-table at Belmont. It would be a waste of the reader's time and patience to recapitulate the particulars of their singularities : let him only recall to his mind's eye their figures and costume ;—the planter's club tail and crocodile squinting eyes ; the face of fat Fill-beer, resembling at once those of Falstaff and Bardolph ; the black eye of the holy wight, his bruises and contusions. Then again, their heads, and the expression of the passions which governed their features ; the attorney's rage and pride, mixed up with spleen and subtlety ; the confusion and dismay of Roland, which he attempted to gloss over with a varnish of cant ; the solemn and yet droll demeanor of Mr Guthrie, who could hardly keep his countenance at the sight of the other two, and who distressed the chopfallen Missionary, when-

ever the smile that was flitting about his lips found its way to the diseased conscience of that gentleman. Let him fancy them seated in a handsome apartment, and attended by two black footmen, almost bursting into laughter at the sight of Roland, yet obliged to restrain their mirth. Let him paint to himself the good appetite of Fillbeer, and the affected delicacy of Roland (like that of Amine picking rice with a bodkin;) while the old planter played away upon the ham as if he had been a lately converted Israelite. And finally, let him calculate the particular feelings which each individually entertained at this moment for the other two, independent of extraneous circumstances; and what portion of those feelings they betrayed in spite of their efforts to disguise them:—he will present to himself a diverting picture.

The civilities of the table were exchanged for sometime before the ex-brewer felt it convenient to call the attention of Mr Roland to the stories he had erewhile told of Mr Fairfax. Roland seemed to shrink from the recollection: he had enough of other matters just now on his mind, and could well spare the oft-repeated explanation of this tale, which he had learnt (as he had given out) from men under sentence of death, and consequently believed himself.

“It will be no proof,” observed Mr Guthrie: “those pirates may have lied. Why did they not

unburthen themselves to others? Why did not you, Roland, take their depositions before a witness?"

"The communication was confidential," replied the Missionary.

The planter stared with surprise. "Confidential! How if he should prove that he was never in company with the pirates?"

"Why," said Roland, "then he proves them liars."

"Aye! so he will, I'll engage," continued Mr Guthrie.

"He is in the country, Mr Roland," said the attorney, "according to Mr Guthrie's account." The Missionary laid down his knife and fork, drew forth his pocket-handkerchief, and wiped the perspiration from his face.

"Yes, Mr Roland," said the planter, "I tell you as I was told, that he will be here today."

"Today!" cried the preacher.

"Aye, today; at least so I learn from the Negro who assisted this hectoring fellow calling himself Sebastian, a brown man who has been a sort of something—I do not know what—to Mr Fairfax in France or in Italy. He is too fine a gentleman to have been his valet; I cannot think in what capacity he could serve him. The Negro says, Mr Roland, that Fairfax will be here this day; but he may speak false. He says also,

speaking of the insurrection that is talked of, that a Negro named Combah was to be king of the island. Do you know such a person?"

"Who—I?" said the Missionary in great agitation. "I?—not I. Combah? Who is he? What is he? A free man or a slave?"

"You don't know him?" continued the planter, remarking the confusion of Roland. "I thought, among the many converts you have baptized, such a person might not have been unknown to you. You keep a list, I know, of all your flock: have you it about you!"

"I never heard the name," said Mr Fillbeer, looking with some surprise at the Missionary. "Where is your list?"

"I have it—not about me—let me see: no—I have left it in my portmanteau; or perhaps I lost it in the storm."

"Ah! where were you in the storm, Roland?" said Mr Guthrie.

"My portmanteau and its contents," continued the Missionary, "were wetted in the river and in the rain; yet I will search for my memoranda."

"Why the devil," exclaimed the planter, "cannot you tell us where you were in the storm, and where you got your black eye? My house was almost blown away, and this I should think was in danger. I am sure the roof of mine would have been taken off, but for the assistance I got

from the pirates. It is an ill wind which blows nobody good."

Roland was moving off to his portmanteau; but the old gentleman brought him to again.

"Roland! Where did you weather the storm? We shall begin to think you were intriguing some where or other."

The culprit started at the observation, as if he had been stung by a rattle-snake. "Intriguing, Mr Guthrie! Am I a person to intrigue with slaves and ——"

"Brown girls, I meant, Roland. No offence, sir, I hope. I said nothing about intriguing with slaves; but the black girls above, yonder, say you were sweet upon them the evening of the storm—sweet in two senses, for you were perfumed with all sorts of scents. With your gallantry we have no right to meddle; and if your black eye is to be attributed to that, I have done, and shall only counsel you to hide yourself till these *damned spots* are out."

"Swear not in my presence," said the preacher; "and do not injure the character of one who has always felt towards you as a friend, by oblique hints at transactions which my religion forbids."

"I will leave it to Mr Fillbeer," rejoined the planter, "to say whether my hints are oblique or not. If there is no woman in the case there is

only one thing besides to which I can attribute your absence, and your reserve on the present occasion."

"Name it not," cried the Missionary in a new alarm.

"Name it not!" re-echoed the planter. By —— I will. *Sit mihi fas audita— a— a— audita.*—Let me be heard. Perhaps brother Roland has been trying to convert the old watchman that lives by the cave yonder in the rocks—the old reprobate who is suspected of Obeah. You know, Mr Roland, what he said when our parson threatened him once with hell-fire for his practices——Stay, Mr Roland—Mr Roland, excuse me ——"

"Excuse *me*, Mr Guthrie."

Roland was not to be detained, except by force: he bolted into his chamber, on pretence of looking for his pocket-book, and bolted the door after him.

"Why, what is this?" said the planter, in some amazement, to the fat attorney. "What, in the name of heaven, is this?—Roland is mad."

"Very extraordinary," replied Fillbeer, raising his eyebrows, and depressing the corners of his mouth, while he stuck his punchy thumbs into the two uppermost button holes of his coat, as if to support his *elephantine* arms.

"May I be shot," resumed Mr Guthrie, "if I don't think he knows more about the insurrection than he ought."

“Than he ought, Mr Guthrie?”

“Aye, than he ought: for if he does know of it, he ought not to conceal his knowledge for a moment. Did you not mark his agitation when I mentioned the name of this Combah? And he actually took fright when I spoke of the old watchman and his character.”

“Why, what can the old watchman have to do with it?” said the attorney; “you mean Hamel, do you not?”

“I know not his name,” replied the other; “but there is always an Obeah man in every insurrection; there always has been; though I cannot say that the watchman is a dabbler in the art: I spoke at random to Mr Roland. He has been somewhere and in some company for which he is ashamed; that is evident.”

“Why, you know, Mr Guthrie,” resumed the attorney, “Roland aspires to your beautiful daughter, and may dislike to own any piece of gallantry, successful or otherwise, to the young lady’s father:—perhaps he will be more communicative to myself.”

“Try him, sir.”

“I will; but in the meantime I trust you, sir, will not sanction any illegal attempts on the part of Mr Fairfax to seize his property here; which must end in violence, if not in murder.”

“Hush—hush—Mr Fillbeer,” said the old

planter. "Murder! You, a disciple—no, no—an apostolic brother of Roland, a serious Christian—you talk of murder!"

"I am no brother of Roland's."

"Indeed! I heard you call him so when you first accosted him."

"No matter—I renounce him."

"What! already, Mr attorney?"

"I tell you, Mr Guthrie, I will defend my rights here to the very last drop of my blood."

"Body of me!" murmured the planter, "here is a mighty soul in all this fat! Who could have thought it?—As for his blood, nothing shorter than a spit can reach it. Fairfax must treat him, if needs be, like a turtle, and lay him on his back.—Do nothing violent, Mr Fillbeer," he added aloud; "do justice, and love mercy, as you walk humbly with your God."

"I am the best judge of my own actions and feelings," replied the attorney. "I have spoken my mind—I am not a man to change: let Mr Fairfax beware!"

"Adieu, sir," said the planter. "Here comes my horse, and yonder goes the apostle Roland. Why, this is worse and worse: there must be something wrong, radically wrong: see how he steals away—'how like a guilty thing!' This must be seen into."

"It is indeed very extraordinary," observed the fat man, waddling to the piazza door again, though

his fat was set into a fermentation by his apprehensions respecting Fairfax, and the presentiment he could not help entertaining of a battle, for which he was firmly resolved.

Mr Guthrie saluted him, and rode after the Missionary; while Fillbeer, having watched him as long as the road admitted of his keeping him in view, and ruminated with a shrewd guess on the affairs of Roland, turned about at last, and sought the interior of his abode, like a wild beast retiring into the penetralia of his den; gnashing his three teeth with rage and vexation. He sent for his overseer and his three book-keepers, determining to hold with them a council of war; and summoned all the drivers, and the head men among the Negroes, to come directly up to the *great house* for the same purpose.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Poor worm, thou art infected :
This visitation shows it. THE TEMPEST.

THE order of our story brings us now again to the pretty Michal, whom we left watching the slumbers of her dear and too sincere Sebastian. If, by any fatality (as all things are predestined, even to the note of a pigeon) he had set off into a vigorous snore, a person of more sentiment, making the best of everything, might have extracted some consolation from the circumstance, some counterpoise in the imagination to lighten the load of love which oppressed her innocent and affectionate heart. But Michal could have borne that, although he had outsnored the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, without letting fall a grain of the charity which possessed her mind, or deviating from the course of tenderness and sympathy which her heart was but too ambitious to run. She looked on him, and then on the lake, still watchful for the black duppie—and then again

at the object of her love, with a feeling almost akin to that with which a fond mother watches the slumber of her first born—and then again on the little lake; and while she gazed upon it, her thoughts wandering from scene to scene, her mind became distressed by the mournful pictures it continually presented to itself of disappointed hope; and her eyes were more than once filled with tears. “What consolation,” thought she, can I derive from this, the punishment of my folly? If I could but serve him—save him from danger, render him some signal benefit, to ensure his lasting gratitude, I should still be happy. If he could value the feeling that draws my heart to him, if he would think hereafter of poor Michal as of one who would have laid down her life to do him service—But no, no, no—he will think no more of me; he makes a jest of me, of my presence, and of the motive that brought me here. I had better, now he sleeps so sound, leave him entirely to his repose, return home to my mistress and my mother. He wants me not; he has this Negro almost at his orders; and his master, or whatever he is—Mr Fairfax—is soon to be here:—I had better go.”

She rose to depart; but the sight of the lagoon brought again the duppie to her recollection. “I must not leave him,” she said to herself: “that duppie may do him some injury, if he should

come up again. I should like much to know what he can be, and where he is hid. There must be some way under the rocks, where he has dived; yet the shore is sand: but there is no water runs out of the lake—I never thought of that before—and here are three little streams running into it: where can the water go to?”

She sat down again, and thought of all the strange tales she had heard in days of yore of ghosts and necromancy; but nothing brought any satisfaction to her mind. “Spirits,” she fancied, “appear only in the dark; and this must be a man who walks about in the day. He can be no good.” She walked quietly and softly round the lagoon. The shore seemed to shelve gradually; but the centre yet appeared too deep in proportion to the nature of the shore. She threw a stone into the middle, and watched the bubbles rise to the surface for at least half a minute—till she could almost count a hundred. The next thought that occurred to her, was to undress, and try to sound the bottom of the lagoon herself: for the dames and damsels of Jamaica, not excepting many of the white ladies, swim like coots. But modesty forbade this: Sebastian might awake; or Hamel might return; or the duppie might be somewhere about, and see her, though he pretended to be blind; and he might take advantage of her situation to enter the cave, and ex-

ecute any intention he might have with respect to Sebastian.

She returned to (her lover, he cannot be called) the being she loved, who was still in a deep sleep on the spot where he had awaked her with his kisses. These she had no thought of returning just now; but she drew nearer to the bench, as if at least to gratify her eyes with a good look at his features. "He is not a Mulatto," said she to herself: "his hair is softer than mine; and his face is as fair by nature, though it is burned by the sun. What has he got here?" She spied a black ribbon beneath his waistcoat, which went round his neck under his neckcloth: it was tucked into the bosom of his shirt, perhaps by accident. "Let me see if there is anything fastened to it." He breathed deep—the Quadroon stopped. "If he should wake, and catch me here?" But no, his sleep was too sound, and Michal's touch was light and tender. She drew the ribbon out of his bosom. "There is a picture—gracious heaven, it is Miss Joanna!"—A crowd of ideas and recollections rushed upon her mind, and she almost gasped for breath. "Why, he *does* then love my mistress—at least he did not mean to mock me—he said he was engaged to marry her. Ah! she is handsomer than I am: what beautiful eyes, blue like the sea! And what pretty hair!—I know how pretty it is. But her

cheeks are not so red as this: they are white, and she never smiles now as the picture does. That is old Roland's fault—an ugly disagreeable creature! Well, let us put it back again. What wonder shall we have next? There have been diamonds or some ornaments about it; for here are empty holes: they must have been pulled out, perhaps by robbers. Let me put it into the place I took it from. He is hardly fair enough, I should think, to marry my mistress: I wonder she did not know him. There must be some deceit or disguise: let us see if his skin is as dark as his face."

The Quadroon peeped into the bosom of his shirt with a presentiment of what she was to see. "Mother—mother of me!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "he is a white man!"

"Hah! Michal!" cried Sebastian, starting from his slumber. "What is the matter? Who? Where is that blind Negro? A white man, did you say? What is the matter, and why are you alarmed—and wherefore do you weep?"

The soubrette was upon her knees, hiding her face in her hands.

"My pretty Michal, speak: what has frightened you?—Ah! you are in possession of my secret:—get up—arise, dear Michal."

He found the picture hanging loose from his neck, outside his waistcoat. She would not rise:

she lifted her head, and presented her pretty face, suffused with tears and blushes, and crossed her arms on her bosom with an air of the most enchanting modesty, while she bowed before him.

“Forgive me, sir; forgive me.”

“Dear Michal, there is nothing to forgive.”

He raised her from the ground, and strained her to his bosom. “Michal, we shall be friends for evermore: you know my secret, you deserve to know it: I am ashamed I did not confide it to you; I am happy you have found it out; indeed I wonder it escaped you hitherto. These are Hamel’s drugs,” he added, pointing to his cheeks. “I owe to them my safety, and my escape from Cuba. But I have worn them long enough.”

“Ah,” said Michal with a sigh, “then you are Mr Fairfax! Oh, how happy will my young lady be!”

The pretty maid’s tears began to flow afresh at the idea of her mistress’s happiness being the cause of her own chagrin, and at the comparison which forced itself upon her mind between their relative situations. However, she had a generous mind, and taking the hand at the possession of which as she said she had too vainly aspired, she put it to her lips, and invoked a blessing—all happiness upon his true heart. “But you must be on your guard,” she continued, recollecting herself anew: “you are in great danger, and have

a number of enemies against you. There is the attorney below at Belmont, and master Roland, who have abused your name, and say you are a wicked man: you remember what I told you at my mother's house. But the most extraordinary thing of all is, the dislike which Mrs Guthrie has taken to you. Master Roland has often told me that she cannot bear the mention of your name; and I have heard her myself speak of you as of the most unfeeling and merciless profligate on the earth. I know not why—I never heard her reasons; but I have often listened when she has talked with Miss Joanna about you, and I have always heard the same opinion expressed ever since I knew her.”

“How many years is that, Michal? I wonder I do not recollect you; for it is little more than four years since I left the island. Rose and Eleanor I remember as children, not above eleven or twelve years old; but I have no remembrance of you or your mother.”

“No,” said Michal; “we came from Spanish Town. We belonged to master Guthrie's aunt, who died about four years ago; and we came to him just after the fire, when you went away to England.”

“I must obtain an interview with Mrs Guthrie, if I can, and hear her objection to me. Old Guthrie too is my enemy. For Mr Fillbeer, the

trustee, I care nothing. If I had not been robbed by the Cuba pirates, I had that which would have dispossessed him in an hour. As it is, I must make the best of the matter, and throw myself on old Guthrie's generosity for protection and assistance. But while his wife is so averse to me, I cannot hope for that."

"Oh," said the Quadroon, "Mr Guthrie is a good man, and I am sure he will do anything for you."

"Well, Michal, we must talk of that anon. Has Hamel been here again; or did the Negro rise from the water?"

"Neither," replied the girl. "I watched a long time after you were asleep: I saw him no more. But the lagoon is deep in the middle, and it must have a communication with some other place; for no water comes out of it. Let us climb the rocks, and look for the other little lake you told me of. Perhaps the water of this mixes with that beneath these rocks, and so the other lake should be close at hand; or what can have become of that strange duppie-looking man?"

"He certainly was flesh and blood," replied Sebastian, "and made as much splashing as an alligator would have done; and if he is not drowned, he must have come up somewhere long ago. But let us try to mount the rocks. Time was, I knew every path and every pinnacle about

these wildernesses, and thought I knew every cave; but Hamel says I do not; and the trees grow so wondrous fast in this country, that even a house is upturned by them in a year or two, if it is deserted. No wonder I should be at a loss to know my own old haunts."

While Sebastian (for so we must call him till he has parted with his brown face) was speaking, the Quadroon was engaged in looking round, about the mouth of the cave, at the rocks which rose above it to the height of eighty or ninety feet. She espied the semblance of a practicable ascent, the one before alluded to, consisting of some foot-holes chiselled out of the stone behind a mass of foliage which had found root in the chinks of the precipice, and hung over the face of the rock down to the very ground, where many of the parasitical plants taking fresh root, the whole were bound together as securely as if by ropes; and though not sufficiently strong to admit of a man's clambering up by means of them alone, they sufficed to steady his ascent by the foot-holes, while the umbrageous mass effectually screened him from observation.

"It was here," said Sebastian, "that the blind Negro disappeared the first time. Nothing can be easier—there is no danger; but let us have the gun, Michal, if you will follow me. We know not what we may have to encounter; for

we are intruding into a comparatively undiscovered country, and Hamel says, as well as yourself, that it is all enchanted—all spells and demonology here. There must be something curious in my fate, I should infer; for these rocks were the lot of my ancestors at the capture of the island; and I never heard that any one of them even paid a visit here. The caverns have been the haunt of runaways, as they are said to have been the refuge of the Indians whom the Spaniards found here and hunted to death; and I dare say they could tell some strange tales, if they had the gift of communicating the scenes that have taken place among them. They are no doubt the haunt of runaways still, in spite of Hamel's denunciation; that is, if the runaways are not afraid of his credit as a conjuror. But let us mount."

Sebastian began the ascent, with his gun slung behind him. The space between the rock, and the boughs which grew before it, was about a foot wide; and by the time they had clambered up about seven or eight yards, they reached a ledge or shelf which gave them a perfectly secure footing, and led them about fifty feet higher to an excavation, a natural arch in the precipice, through which they passed to a terrace whereon grew two beautiful orange trees loaded with fruit.

"So far, so good," said Sebastian: "this has the air of romance, and looks a little like en-

chantment." The terrace was environed with high rocks, and sounded hollow beneath his tread. It was an area of about twenty yards diameter, covered with a fine soft herbage, across which a sort of track might be distinguished, leading to a few steps which might be natural or artificial, and by which they ascended to another opening in the rock—not, like the last, a perforation into daylight again, but a dark passage, low and narrow; where it would be necessary to travel on hands and knees.

"We will not venture here," said Michal. "This is too dark and dirty; and we cannot guard against surprise. Over the opening by which we entered is another ledge, where we may walk with ease, as it seems, to the summit of the crags."

The Quadroon was right. They clambered a few feet to the aforesaid shelf, and holding on by the projections in the rock, wound along in a zigzag direction to the top of the precipice, whence they looked down on the whole estate of Belmont, with the ridges of the Blue Mountain beyond, and an immense extent of country besides, all glowing in the mid-day sun. The lagoon which they had left, lay just below their feet, illuminated like the rest of the landscape; and they could distinguish within it the same sort of overhanging rocks as those on which they

stood, deepening in the centre, although the margin of the water was a shore of silver sand. It seemed, by its deep blue colour, to be a bason of immense profundity—a bottomless pit, as far as Sebastian and his companion could distinguish. On the other side they looked only into the little area adorned with the orange trees ; but the second lagoon of which they were in search, must be beyond this, if it were indeed anywhere in this quarter. To satisfy themselves on that point, they clambered along the summits of these pointed and narrow rocks, with considerable danger and difficulty, scaring in their journey three or four little green lizards, which scampered before them, and stopped at every few yards to puff out their orange-coloured throats at them, as if they had been the *genii loci*, alarmed and angry at this violation of the silence and secrecy of their dwellings. The lizards did not offer to descend from the heights to which they confined themselves, until they had skirted one side of the area in which were the orange trees, and reached the rocks above the small cave which Sebastian and his companion had refused to enter. Here Sebastian, being first, looked over these crags, and beheld, as he had expected, the little lagoon which he had visited so many years before in company with Joanna. It was an area similar to that from which they had ascended, but of larger

dimensions, surrounded by the same sort of rocks, and of much greater profundity as they descended to the level of the lagoon outside of the Obeah man's cave : indeed there was reason to believe they descended still lower than that lagoon, as the water rose in this with some little violence, gushing and bubbling to the centre of the surface. They had gained the side of this second area, opposite to that from which Sebastian and Joanna had formerly descried the snake ; and a palm-tree which grew out of the rock beneath them, prevented Sebastian from seeing the spot on which that reptile had been coiled. But although that was not visible, there was something on the farther side of the lagoon no less interesting than the serpent, stretched on the narrow shore, perfectly at ease, if not asleep ; and this was a Negro, the identical duppie who had disappeared in the outer lake, and dived, as it seemed but too probable, under the orange garden to this. His black shirt was hoisted to dry on a bamboo pole which he had stuck in a chink of the rock ; and he had at present wrapped himself in a large piece of blue cloth. The only implement of any kind, offensive, defensive, useful, or amusing, which he had with him, was a bonjaw, that is, a kind of rude guitar, which lay beside him on the grass.

The Quadroon came forward in her turn to contemplate this sleeping Proteus, whom she could have recognised by his features (if there had been no evidence deducible from the circumstance of the black shirt) to be the identical being who had jumped into the lagoon before the cave; a conviction which satisfied the minds of both spectators, as they had supposed the duppie was drowned. Sebastian was as clearly convinced as herself, that it was the same being whom he had seen before: and taking out the Obeah man's glass, which he had still about him, he very diligently perused the Negro's face by the help of it. His eyes were closed, but it seemed he was not asleep; for as he lay on his back, he now and then kicked up his legs alternately, then waved his arms, muttered and laughed, as he articulated—"Cha! cha! the hangman tie him strong—oh this white man! that looks so fair and smells so sweet. Oh wicked, wicked man! Negroes are nothing."

"What can this be?" said Michal, drawing back, as she whispered to her companion.

"Who is he talking of," asked Sebastian, "that smells so sweet?"

"I know only of Roland," replied the girl, "that smells so sweet: he has always a mess of perfumes about his person, and smells of roses

and violets, and all sorts of English smells. But look, he is going to play on his bonjaw; listen to him."

The duppie sat up, tuned his instrument, and making a sort of twangling noise which did not sound much amiss among the rocks which reverberated the music, began to sing—not the following words, but words to the following effect; for I regret much I must not give the story in its native simplicity, inasmuch as the lingo (I must not call it language) would be utterly unintelligible to all my uncreolized countrymen:—

"The night was clear, and the spots of fire were seen in the moon; but a brighter spot of fire was seen by the white man's house.

"What is so lovely as woman, and what is better than singing prayers to God?—Woman is better: the preacher knows it, for he preferred a woman.

"I heard her scream in the middle of the night: the moon and the stars heard it, and I heard it—I, I, I—

"His face was brown, but it was not true; and he was dressed like a brave man: his heart was blacker than my face.

"Oh he was sweet, like sea-side jessamine. I was a coward not to strangle him.

"This is the man the buckras send to teach poor Negroes,—eh? The white man's devil sent him here."

“The white man’s devil sent him here!” said Sebastian, echoing the last words of the song. “What does he mean? He certainly alludes to Roland, and to the fire when old Guthrie was in Guadaloupe. But what was the scream and the woman?”

“Oh, that was the night,” said Michal, “that Mrs Guthrie has never recovered. The fire was laid to you, Mr Fairfax; and my mistress always shudders at the mention of the circumstance.”

“I was on board of a ship in the harbour that very night,” said he in return. “We saw the flames, and we came on shore to help to extinguish them.”

“This man,” continued Michal, “could tell us who made the fire, and who caused the woman to scream, and who the woman was;—but how can we get at him?—There is no way down the rock, and it makes me giddy to look at him so far beneath; and if we could descend, he would jump again into the water, and swim away like an alligator under the rocks back to the other.”

“No,” said Sébastian; “no violence will answer. What is so singular, even Hamel swears he knows not this strange man.”

“But Hamel is as strange a man,” replied Michal; “and there he stands—good heavens, look at him!”

Sebastian looked down, and beheld the Obeah

man, attired as we have described him when we first introduced him, with his crimson bandeau and his scarlet poncho, leaning on his tattooed wand of bamboo. The music had doubtless brought him to the spot, though by what means, or by what passage, it was impossible for the spectators to divine, as they could not see that portion of the rock which formed the barrier of the lagoon beneath them; and there was no visible aperture in front except a small cavity beside which the duppie was seated,—a passage where the Obeah man could not have passed erect, nor in any way without stepping over the amphibious gentleman; and that was a liberty he could not have taken without alarming him.

The duppie had laid down his bonjaw, and folded his arms across his breast, as if in the act of deep meditation; while the wizard stood upright as a palm tree, extending his slim figure to its utmost dimensions, and not more than a dozen paces from him. He moved not; and no breath of wind could find its way into these sequestered courts to agitate his garments; but he kept his eyes fixed on the duppie, as if he had been a rattle-snake waiting to fascinate his prey by glaring at him and overpowering his faculties with horror, the moment he should become sensible of his (the wizard's) presence.

Rattle-snakes, thank heaven, are not found in

Jamaica; but at this moment a large yellow snake issued very gently from beneath the rock between Hamel and the duppie, whom it aroused from his reverie by the rustling it caused among the dead leaves on the grass. It had not displayed more than half its length to the spectators above (for Hamel kept his eyes on the man before him) when it drew itself suddenly back again to its fastness, alarmed no doubt at one or both of the beings it beheld.

The duppie looked round, and gave by his gestures too evident a sign of his having no defect of any consequence in his eyes. He unfolded his arms, placed them on the ground beside him, as one who meditates to spring from a sitting position, collected his legs under him, and cast a hurried glance towards the water.

“Who are you?” said Hamel, without moving; “and where do you come from?”

“I am a man,” replied the duppie; “and I come from the water.”

“And from the fire,” said the conjuror. “I know you: what is your business here?”

“You should know that too, Hamel.”

“Aye, it is to evade the fire.”

“It is.”

An insulting laugh, no ways familiar to the Obeah man, seemed to treat this admission with scorn. “Your efforts are in vain: you were a

slave at Belmont; you dwelt with Roland?—
Speak!”

“I did—I was—I did.”

“You must be my slave: your life is in my power.”

“No, no,” said the other; “my life is yet my own.”

“It is forfeited,” replied the wizard; “and you must obey me. You are an intruder here: will you swear to serve me?”

“No, never!”

“Swear then to serve your lawful master.”

“Whom?”

“Fairfax.”

“Alas, he is dead, or worse than dead—his good name is ruined.”

“But you can prove him innocent,” said Hamel, “and clear his fame, although he were dead.”

“I can.”

“You will?”

“I dare not—I must die myself.”

“Not if he were to give you an assurance of his pardon?”

“Can he do that, if he be dead?”

“He lives—he lives, and could revenge himself at this moment, if he chose.”

“What! by your hands?” said the duppie.

“I am armed.”

“ And I,” replied the Obeah man. “ Look up aloft.”

The duppie turned up his eyes to the summit of the cliff, and beheld the figure of Sebastian darkened against the bright sky, with his gun in his hand, ready to fire upon him, had he offered the least violence to Hamel.

“ Swear then to him—before him,” said the conjuror, “ to appear at the summons of Mr Fairfax ; to prove his innocence, though you betray your own guilt ; to save his fame, though you die for it !”

“ But Roland ?”—said the duppie.

“ Not a word of him. How has he repaid you ? With tales of penitence, and threats of everlasting fire, if you betray him.”

“ Well—I promise.”

“ You will swear ?”

“ Yes, by the memory of my mother, I will speak the truth : save me from Roland.”

“ Roland shall not harm you.—Will it please you to descend, sir ?—I shall meet you at the cave. You,” said he to the Negro, “ must again to your element : give me your shirt, and dive into the lake : you know no other exit or entrance ; and I shall teach you none. Down with you to the deep ; away, man—away !”

The duppie obeyed his directions, delivered

him his black shirt from the staff on which it hung, and throwing aside his garment of blue cloth, appeared naked, with the exception of a pair of cotton drawers. He sprang into the lake; and while Sebastian was still gazing at his diminishing form sinking into the abyss, the wizard had disappeared from the shore without being detected or observed. The agitation of the water subsided into the gurgling and bubbling sound which was natural to it; and the only vestige that remained of the scene which had passed, or the actors who had figured in it, was the duppie's blue garment lying beside his bonjaw on the margin of the lagoon, and his bamboo pole leaning against the rock.

CHAPTER XXVII.

No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure 'scape ; back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong
Can tie the gall up in a slanderous tongue ?

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

By the time that Sebastian and the pretty sou-brette had reached the base of the rocks, and descended from the orange-garden, the duppie was at the mouth of the cave, habited in his black shirt, waiting to receive them. His eyes were free from any blemish ; and he owned, on being interrogated by Michal, that he had once seen the water in the lagoon sink so low, that he had descended by the rocks, and walked through to the inner lake, which had become quite dry ; for there was a passage for the water, deep down on the other side of it, into a chasm called the Devil's Gully, where it fell into the Rio Grande. This occurred just after an earthquake. He said that it was always dry under the orange-garden ; for the water passed along the floor of a cave

there ; and there was but a rock not three yards wide to dive under, to pass from that into the inner lagoon.

“ You belong to Mr Fairfax,” said Sebastian : “ I remember you ; and you came to see your children ? ”

“ I was made free, master,” said the Negro : “ Roland bought me.”

“ How so ? ”

“ He taught me to counterfeit blindness, and bought me for nothing ; but it was not to make me free : he would have sold me, and sent me away from the island. My master only sold me on condition that Roland made me free.”

“ He did so, then ? ”

“ He was obliged, and he has long thought me dead. I shall tell you more, before Mr Guthrie, of Roland’s motives, and why he sent me away ; my life is not safe, while he is in the island ; and I can tell a tale of him——but in good time for that. I have two children here at Belmont, who are slaves : it is four years since I have seen them, though I have been here more than once for the purpose. I have often seen this watchman : I knew that he frequented the caves ; he is more acquainted with them than myself ; but I did not suspect, nor do I know, how he came into that court of the lagoon. *You* know perhaps that he was thought to be a dealer in Obeah ; but

while I confined myself to the shores of this water, nothing, I thought, could catch me; and no one could find out my secret."

"Tell me," said Sebastian, "in what respect the character of Fairfax is affected by your own or Roland's machinations."

"For my own, I can say nothing. Master Roland was too fond of Mrs Guthrie: he did the deed of a villain. Mr Fairfax sailed for England; Roland accused him of the wickedness which *he* had himself committed. I was sent to leeward and to sea; for Roland threatened to have me hanged, if I remained in the island. He said his word was better than a Negro's, and that I fire to the trash-house at Mr Guthrie's."

"And did you so?"

"I used no fire: I put something wrapped in a cloth, which he gave me, among the cane trash; and when I saw the flames mounting above the shingles, I ran, not knowing what I did, into the great house, and hid myself behind a bed. There was a lady in the piazza: I heard her scream; and a white man brought her into the room where I was hid. He spoke to her in whispers; but she heard him not, for she had fainted. She was then beautiful, as she is now, they say. I came from my concealment, thinking to rescue her from the white man's violence. It was Roland: he knew me not at first. I was a fool; he chased

me from the house, and fled himself, as if a wild boar had been at his heels."

During this conversation the Obeah man, in his usual watchman's garb, was sauntering round the lagoon; and Michal, forgetful of her assumed sex, was sobbing ready to break her heart at the tale she heard of her poor mistress. But what were the feelings which agitated the bosom of Sebastian? Rage, indignation, compassion, sympathy. This however, he thought, was not a time for giving way to feeling: they must act. "Michal," said he, "let me conjure you to go home. Tell your master that Fairfax—(I wish I had materials for writing: I have a pencil, but this wilderness will not produce a sheet nor a scrap of paper)—tell your master that Fairfax begs to see him directly at the sunken bridge between Belmont and his own estate—the bridge where Kenrick the robber was shot;—tell him what you please to ensure his coming, but spare the mention of his wife; and tell Joanna —"

"Stay, stay," said Michal, interrupting him, and drying her tears; "write in my hat or on my handkerchief with your pencil, on your own handkerchief—for it is here; and let me first wash it in the lake:—the sun will not be long drying it."

So saying, she stepped to the lagoon: and having soaked and wrung the water out of the pocket-handkerchief, laid it on the sand to dry,

while Hamel remarked to her that women's wits were seldom at a loss.

"Indeed," replied she, "I am at a loss to comprehend you; and know not but you may yet deceive us all."

"Fear me not," said he. "I have great wrongs; but the owner of the estate yonder behaved to me with the kindness of a father and a friend; for his sake I could forego my deep revenge; for his sake at least it shall sleep till justice is done to his heirs. I am proscribed in many men's thoughts; and Roland has it in his power to raise the demons of the white man's law against me. I cannot come down to the bay, nor to Mr Guthrie's: my presence would defeat the object of your lover."

"Alas! he is not my lover," said the Quadroon, blushing.

"Your friend then, the lover of your mistress. The watchman Hamel, or the Obeah man:—in the first character I should be despised, in the second detested. But though I shall remain here, I shall be as useful as you could wish, and of more service than you expect."

The handkerchief was but a few minutes drying; and the letter to Joanna being written out, was folded up and consigned to the bosom of the pretty maid, for it was hardly safe in the shallow pockets of her jacket. She took an affectionate

leave of her late companion, whom she left with the Obeah man and the duppie, though not without some anxieties on his account; and assuming a quicker pace than corresponded with her heavy heart, she was soon lost among the woody forest that skirted what might be called the domain of the Obeah man.

She could not have less than six or seven miles to walk; and it was now about two o'clock in the afternoon. A couple of hours would bring her to her master's; but as it is not our intention to accompany her through every foot of her journey, we shall suppose that an hour at least is passed, and that she has reached the sunken bridge where Sebastian was to meet her master. She sat for a moment on a stone beside the river, a small stream which flowed over it, and had already tucked up her trowsers, to keep them from being wetted as she waded through, when she was startled at the sound of a horse's hoof clattering along the road; and looking forward through the trees which terminated the view before her, she caught a glimpse of mister Roland coming towards her at a good round pace, with a green shade tied over his eyes. He was alone, and had hardly taken any notice of her, but for her retreating back out of the water as he came through; for the consciousness of his black eye prevented him from gazing too much around, at least at any human being:

so that he had actually passed her before he bestowed more than a very hasty glance on her. She turned about to see if he was gone, congratulating herself on escaping his notice ; but she reckoned without her host : he had not proceeded many yards before he pulled up his horse, as if arrested by some sudden recollection ; and turning round to reconnoitre, he observed that she was attired like a sailor. "A sailor boy," thought he : "who said that Mr Fairfax was disguised like a sailor ?" He called out—"Young man, may I ask your name ?"

The Quadroon proceeded on through the water : the Missionary followed.

"Young man, what ho ! stop ; I wish to speak with you."

Michal still hurried on, while Roland called to her ; and finding that he was bent on stopping her, she darted into the wood to avoid him ; but the Missionary, taking courage from her shyness, still pursued, and scrambling off his horse, rushed after her into the thicket. He was soon up with her, and seizing her rather rudely by the arm, demanded imperiously who she was.

"Begone, you hateful man !" she exclaimed. "Let me go."

"I will know," he cried, "if you are a sailor, and what ship you belong to. Let me see your face : this is no Fairfax :—let me see your face."

(He pulled off her hat.) “A Quadroon boy!—Why were you afraid? And why this disguise?—The pretty Michal!”

“Leave me, sir; pursue your course, Mr Roland, and do not interfere with me: my mistress is ill, and wants me.”

“She is indeed,” said the Missionary, as if seized with a sudden qualm. “Young woman, I fear her hour is at hand.”

“What do you mean?” cried Michal, out of breath.

“I mean,” replied the Missionary, “that the thread of her existence is unravelled, unspun; that she totters on the verge of eternity: peace be with her! I have done all that religion could inspire; I have endeavoured to give her all the consolations of faith; but she has that upon her mind which turns hope to bitterness, honey to gall: she will not be comforted.”

“Not by you, master Roland: you are her——”

“What, Michal?” exclaimed he, in some confusion.

“Look at me, Roland,” said the undaunted girl. “You are her murderer!”

Rage and astonishment contended for empire in the Missionary’s features; but he governed his passion. “Michal, you are mad: I heard

that you were come to Belmont ; but I dreamed not of this disguise. You have been to see this furious Sebastian—Ha, ha !”

“ Do you beware of him, monster—murderer, as you are.”

“ For shame, my beauty ; but this passion becomes you. Your sparkling black eyes speak a different language to him ; and you do not blush with anger in his presence ; and he has toyed with every chesnut curl that wantons on your pretty brows. What have you written in your bosom there ? Stanzas to love or remembrance, with a lock of his hair ? Does he write on linen ?”

He had espied the handkerchief, which her struggles to escape him had perhaps caused to obtrude ; and he resolved to see what could be written on it, by foul means, if not by fair ;—not that an idea of Joanna had occurred to him on the subject ; but he had rightly divined that Sebastian was the author of the writing, as well as the reasons for thus using a piece of linen.

“ Let me see it, Michal,” he exclaimed, thrusting his hand over her shoulder towards her bosom : “ give me the handkerchief.”

“ Hold off, villain !” cried the intrepid maid. “ I will die before you shall see it.”

“ You shall not die,” said he ; “ and I will see it—by my virtue, I will. Come what will, I will

have it. There! there! gently now—I have got it.”

He had seized it, and it became unfolded in the struggle; but before he could assure himself of the possession, an unexpected ally approached on the side of the Quadroon in the person of the wizard Hamel, who told him, as courteously as usual, that the young girl was tired, and could not fight with a buckra; and begged him to restore the handkerchief.

“Touch me, at your peril,” said the preacher, holding the handkerchief.

“Oh, master Roland,” replied the Obeah man; “brother Roland!—brother Roland—ha! ha! ha! Your horse is gone through the water, brother. Hah! you have pistols in your pocket. Hold still your hands, or you are a dead man: stir, and you die.”

Hamel observed him feeling for arms, as he guessed by his action and the quivering of his under lip; and being pretty familiar with the preacher's character, he knew too well there was everything to be apprehended from his violence: he sprung on Roland like a cat on its prey, and held a dagger at his throat, before the other could disengage his hands from his pockets.

“Oh, kill him not!” cried the soubrette, snatching back her handkerchief. “Detain him

only till I escape : hurt him not, monster as he is."

"Fly, Michal," said the wizard : "you are safe ;—and for you, brother, I will not hurt you, but I will fasten you to this tree for the present, with your arms still in your pocket : and I will then get your horse, and tie him beside you ; and the next passenger shall do you a greater service than you intended to the pretty girl. Come—I shall not be rough with you."

While he was thus talking, and Michal was hastening home, he took from under his frock two or three fathoms of mahoe rope, which he told Roland he always carried to hang those who violated their sacred oaths. He bound the Missionary by his hands, knees, and also by his throat, to a trumpet-tree which grew beside them. The Missionary did not take correction as a cat laps milk ; but the Obeah man had the dagger ever in his hand, and Roland was effectually cowed. Hamel was however as good as his word ; and having secured the rider, went after the horse, which he brought back through the water, and fastened to another tree in a more conspicuous place ; telling the owner that it would soon attract attention, for Mr Guthrie was expected there in less than an hour, to meet a person whom Roland would be most happy to see—no

other than Mr Oliver Fairfax, the proprietor of Belmont, and the affianced husband of Miss Joanna Guthrie. Having thus spoken, and waved a courteous adieu to "brother Roland," the Obeah man disappeared among the boughs of the forest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Out, you rogues, you knaves ! work for your livings.
There's no more charity among men
Than among so many mastiff dogs.

LIFE AND DEATH OF LORD CROMWELL.

It is high time that we should give some account of our quickly deposed Brutchie Combah, and the troop of sable gentlemen and ladies who had been scared from their festivities and imaginary emancipation by the sound of a single word "Maroons," uttered by the terrible Sebastian. As for the generality of these good folks, they took to their heels, some to the estates around Port Antonio, some to the eastward, others to the west. A few fled to the rocks around the scene of their extravagancies ; and half a dozen, among whom was the Brutchie, towards the fastnesses of the Blue Mountains in the interior. Happy to find themselves free from pursuit, they attributed their escape very naturally to their own talents and ingenuity, and wandered far from

the spot where the dreadful word was uttered, to await in patience a second and a better opportunity of uniting again to put in force 'the occult, mysterious, yet too well comprehended, recommendations of the devout Missionary.

As most of the party had consisted of what the French call *canaille*, we shall interest ourselves or our readers no farther with their virtues or vices. But the Brutchie, inasmuch as he aspired to a white beauty and a crown, is entitled to some additional notice on the score of the first article of his ambition, even if he ought to be despised on account of his desire for the second—the work of the tinman and the toyman, as Roland remarked in his soliloquy. The Brutchie had carried off the crown with him in his flight, though it had become inconvenient to be worn, from the batterings and squeezings it had received in the conflict with which the new king had entertained his subjects at his coronation; an adventure without a precedent, proving that if Solomon were not right in asserting that there was nothing new under the sun, the mistake was excusable, inasmuch as Solomon had not discovered the continent or the islands of the West, where the cabbages are a hundred feet high, the fish fly, and oysters grow upon trees. Such a scuffle between a new crowned monarch of England and his archbishop of Canterbury, hand to hand and foot to foot,

would certainly strike all Europe with amazement, and excite no little ridicule on the part of our neighbours: and God deliver us from the chance of furnishing such materials for mirth! But in Jamaica, among ungenteel Negroes of no condition and quality, and without any precedents to the contrary, such an affair did not seem at all out of character or place. It excited some admiration; and perhaps many of the spectators thought it a thing of course, a part of the ceremony; and as such, who knows but the next king, which we are sure to have (I mean of course in Jamaica) may repeat the scene, and that such a scuffle may henceforth become as much a matter of importance, propriety, and necessity, in coronations there, as the challenge of our hereditary champion at a coronation in England.

However, to be more serious: his majesty (not his "sacred majesty"—as the oil, though duly consecrated, was not administered to the woolly pate of the monarch)—fled with as much precipitation as any of his antidiluvian or postdiluvian predecessors, vying in speed with the unfortunate Darius, or the crazy Charles of Sweden in his retreat from Pultowa, or Napoleon from Waterloo, or any other discomfited king. He never stopped till he had proceeded half a dozen miles at least, lasting thickets, sacred to snakes, musquitos,

pigeons, and toads, which last entertain themselves by taking the air on the tops of the trees, as well as the pigeons, though how they get there, none of them have told us. He scrambled over rocks, amid waterfalls and ravines; now clambering like the youth who went in search of the waters of oblivion, now diving, not into the water like our duppie, but into dingles and bosky dells—

Where the thrush and lark sing never,
But the crickets scream for ever;—

now amidst groves of cedar and mahogany, o'er-topped by the mountain-palms and the Santa Maria, or the huge juniper—

Where the huge axe with heaved stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt.

In short, he never stopped till he reached the top of a naked rock about six miles in a straight line behind Port Antonio, where he found a brace of runaway friends quietly breakfasting under a piece of an old sail, gypsy-fashion.

The Brutchie came up to them, reeking with perspiration, and puffing with the race he had run; and dashing down his gingerbread crown on the rock, he exclaimed in a tone of mingled ridicule and rage—"C—e and d—n all crowns and all kings, and all preachers and Anabaptists! May the devil have them all, and all that belong to them! I'll be a downright robber, not make

laws to rob. Let Hamel plot, and Roland preach and plot : I will be alone. Fools, rascals, villains, and cowards !”

When knaves fall out, as the proverb says, honest folks come by their own. This is not always true ; but knaves themselves more frequently come by their own in the shape of halters and whippings, and by a certain portion of their own in the mutual surrender and acknowledgment of a few hard names, such as those above recited. This was the case in the present instance ; and his majesty, king Combah, spoke with the accuracy of an oracle, as he helped himself to the plantains and pickled herrings, and soothed himself for the bumps which Roland had left on his head, and the punches he had given him in his bread-basket or epigastric region. But as Brutchie began to cool, and his limbs to get a little stiff, he felt more of the subject than of the sovereign ; and having acted his part as well as he could before company, right royally, he thought himself at liberty now to curse and swear as much as he pleased, by way of easing his passion, as well as to revenge himself on his enemies. This was a Chinese mode of vengeance in great vogue in the time of the jesuit Le Comte, who relates that if a house were robbed, the owner and his family would take it in rotation to sit on the roof and curse the robber, keeping up an incessant

tirade of execrations, until (which usually happened) the thief was so horrified as to make restitution of the stolen goods. A feeling somewhat analogous prevails among the Africans, who will bear blows more patiently than curses, and any violence rather than hear their mothers cursed; but it does not extend their hopes or their ideas to the recovery or to the restitution of stolen goods, although they attach more weight to curses which they utter than we are wont to do in Europe. There are other more ancient authorities for the importance and consequence of these awful denunciations, which we need not point out to the reader, who will be satisfied to hear that the Brutchie continued the fire of this artillery long after he had lighted his pipe, and until he had smoked himself into a stupor of repose.

He awoke, after a few hours' dreaming, with recruited hopes, energies, and intentions, resolving at any rate to make an effort for the young lady whom he had selected to be his bride, and if he could not reign as a king—an honour of which he did not altogether despair—to make war upon the Whites, and set the Negroes by the ears. He now felt the necessity of having advice respecting what was going on, and the importance of being on good terms with Hamel, who was, and always had been, his oracle. Beside which, the blows

he had received from Roland had completely disgusted him with that vain and vacillating personage, and stimulated him to wreak his spite upon him by turning his preaching into ridicule, and exposing his schemes ; and if opportunity should again serve, of securing his person, and taking vengeance on him for his duplicity, his vanity, selfishness, superstitious folly, and splenetic insolence.

His breakfast companions, as well as the few of his comrades who had followed him from the ruined settlement, were to him little more than so many mules or oxen, over whom he had as complete an ascendancy as a hog-hunter has over his dog. . He was vastly their superior in strength of mind and body ; and although he had been hurried away by the panic which had infected all his followers, he was by no means deficient in courage or resolution. He had slept amidst this crew, confident and unconcerned. He knew that they considered him next to invulnerable, except as to fists, on account of some charm he had obtained from the Obeah man, of whom they were all in great dread : swords and bayonets were not to hurt him, nor molten lead. They were but few who knew that he had ever been baptized ; and even these suspected he had been so served only to flatter the vanity of the Missionary, without attaching any importance to the ceremony.

Combah got up from his slumbers, like the tiger from his lair ; and without saying a word to Quashie, Quao, Diego, Tom, Jack, Fiddlestring, or Julius Cæsar, marched off with his machet in the direction of the Obeah man's abode, to learn some news of this so famous Sebastian, and to hatch some scheme against the miserable and yet mischievous Roland.

CHAPTER XXIX.

We had as good sit still, as rise to fall.

RABELAIS.

BEING perfectly familiar with all the passages through the jungles of Portland and St George's, the Brutchie travelled with no less expedition than secrecy towards the enchanted abode of his late host and ally, the magician Hamel; his mind burning, as his heat increased, with the recollection of his disgraceful overthrow before his subjects, and his no less disgraceful flight from the Maroons. Indeed, he began to suspect that there might have been some roguery played off in the concoction of that last adventure: however, time and the conjuror, he knew, would explain all; and he doubted not but that Hamel would assist him in his revenge on the Missionary, and in any scheme of retaliation on the hard-hearted and tyrannical Whites. He fell in with one or two persons in his route, from whom he heard nothing connected with the history of his own affairs; the sole thing he learnt of any interest being the

report set on foot by Drybones, though sadly perverted in its circulation—that the robber captain, Sebastian, was coming to take possession of Belmont. “The robber captain!” thought the Brutchie. “A Mulatto too! He is a bold man: I should like to see him face to face.”

His course lay through the estate of Belmont; and being provided with a forged pass, he determined to investigate this report more narrowly himself, meaning at the same time not to run his head into any unnecessary mischief. The Mulatto captain, he concluded, must turn out either a rival or an ally to himself—in the first case an enemy; and he had naturally an inclination to know the worst that could befall him. Under this impression, he crept silently through the woods at the back of the house, keeping clear of the Negro huts, and got into a tree just behind the works, where he could overlook all the premises with great facility; and, as the sea breeze began to decline, could distinguish, amongst the gabble of the Negroes, a great deal of what at least interested them and the Quinbus Flestrin, as he was nicknamed, the attorney.

Mr Fillbeer was on his steed, haranguing some of his people as they kept dropping in, and telling them that a robber captain had threatened to come and rob the house, pretending that he was Mr Fairfax; that if he *were* Mr Fairfax, he would have no business here; and that he should treat

him as a robber, and shoot him, if he offered to stay in violation of the law.

"No, no," said one of the book-keepers: "do not threaten that; you must not shoot him."

"No, master Fillbeer," cried a Negro, repeating the words, "you must not shoot him. Let the poor Negroes see their old master's son once more before they are dead."

"Who are you, sir?" exclaimed the attorney, turning round upon him. "Hold your tongue, sirrah: do you wish to make a mutiny among the Negroes?"

"I tell you, master attorney," replied the Negro, "that if old master's son comes here, and has the law in his pocket, the Negroes won't shoot him, nor let you shoot him: they'll pull you down, and put him up in your place. I speak the truth; you may go talk to others who will flatter you and speak with a sweet mouth; but I tell you what you must expect. We know what is right, as well as white men; we know who we belong to, who gives us clothes, and grounds and houses. For one, I long to see my dear master come home again, poor creature—God bless him! Sent to wander about the world, and kept out of his own house and plantations, and cheated of his Negroes."

"Sirrah, sirrah," cried Fillbeer, shaking the stick of his umbrella at him, "you are a mutinous dog; you will be a great man in a rebellion; you want to be free, sirrah—you do!"

“Cha !” said the Negro.

“Do you answer me in that way, sir ? I’ll have you flogged for your insolence.”

“I say *cha*, master attorney, when you say I want to be free : what’s the use of *free* to me ? Who will give me a house and grounds, and take care of my children ? I want nothing but to see my own poor master again, and for him to enjoy his own. I do not like you, master Fillbèer ; that is the truth ; I like my own master better ; I love him, poor thing ; all the slaves love him, and pray *Garamighty* to send him safe home. And now, master attorney, you may flog me when you please.”

• “Hold your tongue, sir.”

This speech affected the oily man of grace (to compare small things with great, or rather great things with small) much as his majesty king James the Second was affected at the shouts of his soldiery on the acquittal of the bishops. He thought for the first time of abdicating his authority.—Four years’ accounts in arrear even to the mortgagee ; dilapidations, appropriations, a few spoliations, all the confusion of such an establishment badly conducted,—all rushed into his head. “But not yet,” said the man-mountain ; “I’ll die with harness on my back : time enough to surrender when the enemy is in the citadel. You talking fellow !” (The talking fellow was gone to the field again.) “Mr Saunder-

son"—(this was the book-keeper)—“pray keep these fellows’ mouths shut : they are become so saucy, since there is this palaver of their freedom, that one dare hardly speak to them of their moral feelings ; and there is no such thing as flogging them into silence and respect.”

“No,” said Mr Saunderson, “there is not indeed ; you may thank your sect for that : you came here with a psalm in your mouth—I heard you myself. You were not so fat then, it is true,” he added laughing ; “but you have set the slaves an example of liberty, as well as preached it to them.”

“How so, sir ?” said Fillbeer with a grin.

“By living here like a lord, without rendering any accounts.”

“And how do you know that ?”

“It is no secret, sir ; all the parish, all the island, knows it.”

A second thought of abdication here intervened ; but it was smothered in rage, which subsided gradually into chagrin. He turned his horse about, and rode away from the works in a mood which master Matthew would call melancholy and gentlemanlike ; leaning his fat head tenderly on his bosom, while his big belly, projecting before him, prevented him from seeing more than the tips of his horse’s ears. If the reader has ever seen Mr Lambert, of fat memory (his picture will suffice) his imagination may set that mass of mortality on horseback. No horse could have borne

him ; therefore we encounter only what is supposititious in the picture of the mind ;—but such as the reader may fancy the effigies of Mr Lambert in the saddle,—with the reduction of one-third perhaps as to quantity,—was the figure of this fat Fillbeer. Then let the reader stretch his imagination a little farther, and paint a few tears trickling round and down the glossy cheeks of this man of sentiment ; fancy the sighs that stretched his leathern coat almost to bursting—sighs of contrition too ; he appealed to heaven and to the spirit of Wesley. “ He,” said the penitent, “ was reprov’d for his negligence at Birmingham by a shower of hail : would it could hail here ! I have been a sinner by omission, if not by commission : I was virtuous, religious, and all that, to a certain extent ; everything prospered with me ; but in my prosperity I forgot the hand that had raised me up ; and now my cup shall be turned into bitterness, and I shall be sent forth upon the wide world again, bereft of every blessing—uh !—uh ! The Devil take Fairf— Oh dear, there, what am I saying ?—Oh Fillbeer, Fillbeer,—thou art an ungodly ass ; and the name of Satan is as often in thy mouth as that of thy maker—uh ! uh ! uh ! ”

Thus he sat, and sighed, and whined, and repented ; using a great many more expressions whose holy character prevents us from recording them to the prejudice of good men’s feelings.

Even Brutchie, who from his perch had heard the conversation, was affected by the 'sighs of the attorney—but it was with laughter. He saw him wipe his eyes with his handkerchief, and descried the convulsion which his huge shoulders repeated, like a telegraph, from the head-quarters of his diaphragm ; not that his head quartered there—that was gently couched on his fat bosom, as before stated.

The Brutchie watched him turn his horse toward the cane pieces ; and slipping down from the tree, took again to his heels, satisfied with the information he had acquired, as it did not point at himself in any respect,—Sebastian and Fairfax being the only names which excited any interest at present on this estate. He left the man-mountain in the *interval* (a most “vile phrase,” used to signify an avenue or glade between the cane pieces) weeping like a glacier in the dog-days—tears and perspiration ; and keeping the covert of the woods, he skirted the cultivated grounds as far as they extended ; then hastened on more fearlessly toward the cave of Hamel.

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